Rumsfeld offers passionate defense against recent criticism Page 7

STARS STRIPES.

Woman pays \$50,000 to clone cat



Würzburg post feels holiday mail crunch



Eagles, Steelers top Pro Bowl picks

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Bomber in Mosul likely wore Iraqi military uniform

U.S. investigating how attack was carried out on base Page 5



To our readers: Stars and Stripes will not be printed on Christmas

Across U.S., frosty weather brings snow, fun, travel headaches

Day. Look for the next edition on Dec. 26.

In Golconda, III., kids slide down a neighborhood slope Wednesday after the winter's first snowfall.

STARS STRIPES. COMING SOON



2004 was year of wacky and tacky



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ws Tracker ... What's new with old news

Nation

Eric Rudolph case: A judge has or dered the government to show serial bombing suspect Eric Rudolph's defense any bomb replicas or sketches that it plans to use in his federal death penalty trial

U.S. Magistrate Judge T. Michael Putnam, ruling on a series of defense motions Tuesday, said the government would not have to produce any bomb replicas or mock-ups that were put together in the investigation and were not "final" versions.

Rudolph's federal death penalty trial in the bombing is scheduled next year. He also is charged in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics bombing that killed a woman and two other blasts in Atlanta in 1997

Blake trial testimony: Robert Blake laughed and smiled as he dined with his wife the night she was shot, the restaurant's owner testified at the "Baretta" star's murder trial.

Bonny Lee Bakley was shot May 4, 2001, after dining at Vitello's restaurant. Blake maintains he left Bakley in the car to go back into Vitello's to retrieve a handgun he carried for protection and returned to find her bleeding

A doctor testified he heard the actor calling out that his wife was bleeding and needed help, but said did not offer assistance because he thought Blake's cries were insincere.

Tobacco payments: A tobacco-quota buyout approved by Congress this year releases cigarette companies from making payments to farmers in 14 states that had been re-quired by a landmark 1998 settlement, a North Carolina judge ruled Wednesday.

The millions of dollars in Phase Two payments have compensated tobacco growe for losses they were expected to suffer under higher cigarette prices resulting from the agreement between tobacco companies and the states

Cigarette companies contend they weren't obligated to make a final \$189 million payment this month to farmers because Congress approved a \$10.1 billion tobacco buyout this fall. North Carolina Business Court Judge Ben Tennille agreed and also ruled that the companies should get a refund on payments made earlier this year.

Priest shot by accuser: A priest facing trial next month for allegedly molesting a former altar boy who later shot him has been defrocked by Pope John Paul II, The Associated Press has learned.

Maurice Blackwell, 58, is scheduled to go on trial Jan. 3 on four counts of child sexual abuse against Dontee Stokes

Blackwell was shot by Stokes in May 2002 in the midst of the national scandal involving Catholic priests. In the aftermath, Baltimore prosecutors reviewed Stokes' allegations and charged the priest with molest ing Stokes

He served a sentence of home detention.



El Gordo Christmas lottery: Cristobal Ortega, center, owner of a bar in Lorca, Spain, celebrates Wednesday after he and several of his customers won a part of the top prize of Spain's El Gordo (Fat One) Christmas lottery, the richest in the world, with the number 54600. The Gordo uses a complex system of shared numbers that divides wealth among millions of people holding numbers that go from 00001 to 66000.

Military

Raptor crash: An Air Force general said that he expects the F/A-22 Raptor to join combat operations by the end of next year despite this week's crash of one of the next-generation stealth fighter jets.

"We're going to keep right on going," Maj. Gen. Stephen M. Goldfein, the Air Warfare Center commander at Nellis, where the approximately \$133 million jet went down on a runway shortly after takeoff Monday.

The pilot suffered scrapes but was otherwise unharmed.

War on terrorism

Soldier charged: A judge on Wednesday ordered a soldier, his wife and her cousin to stand trial in an alleged plot to keep the enlisted man out of Iraq by shooting him in the leg. Prosecutors said Army Spc. Marquise J.

Roberts; his wife, Donna Roberts; and her cousin, Roland Fuller, had originally planned to find someone else to undertake the shooting but decided to do it themselves when they got no takers.

Marquise Roberts, 23, a supply specialist who had spent seven months in Iraq, was distraught about having to return to combat duty and wanted to stay with his family, authorities said.

Military officials have said that Roberts could face military discipline if the charges prove to be true.

Spain bombings complaint: The Islamic Commission of Spain has asked the parliamentary panel probing the Madrid train bombings to refrain from referring to terror-ists as "Islamic" or "Islamist," the leading daily El Pais said Thursday.

"Unfortunately, [these terms] are used too frequently in political, journalistic and editorial circles, almost on a daily basis, creating a public opinion of social, anti-Islamic alarm," the group's leader Ria Tatary said in a letter sent to the parliamentary commission

He said several Muslims, including an imam were killed in the March 11 attacks

Ireland bank robbery: The outlawed Irish Republican Army denied involvement Thursday in this week's massive raid on the Northern Bank in Belfast

In a message issued to Belfast media. the IRA said its members played no role in Monday's robbery, when a large and well-organized gang stole more than 22 million pounds from the bank's main underground vault

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Notes to readers

■ The Dec. 26 edition of the paper will be late for readers in Italy and Turkey due to the holiday closure of the Italy printer. Stars and Stripes regrets the inconvenience.

■ Tom Philpott's "Military Update" column will not be in this edi-It will appear in the Dec. 26 edition instead







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Promotion tracks split for Reserve and Guard

BY LISA BURGESS Stars and Strines

ARLINGTON, Va. - Reserve and National Guard officers will soon have separate promotion tracks instead of competing against one another.

Beginning in January, the Army will have three separate promotion categories for reserve component officers: a list for National Guard officers, a list for Army Reserve officers and a third list for Army Reserve officers assigned to active duty, said Lt. Col. Wanda Walker, a personnel policy integrator for reserve component promo-

The old Army Promotion List grouped together all Guard and Reserve officers except for chaplains and Army Medical Department officers, who have their own promotion systems, according to Army personnel officials

But that system led to a disproportionate promotion selection rate for the Army's 3,500 Reserve officers who are assigned to active duty status: about 90 percent, as compared to their regular Reserve and National Guard brethren, who have been promoted in the 70 percent to 80 percent range, Walker said Wednesday.

The number of Reserve officers who can be assigned to active duty is capped by Con-

Although some Army personnel officials said the old system worked well because "the best-quality officers were getting promoted ... basically, the system wasn't fair," Walker said

That's because Reserve and Guard officers who may work only a few weeks each year were being compared to officers who do their jobs full-time, she said.

The new system, however, "will level the playing field," because officers "will be looked at against the same kinds of officers." Walker said.

Once the changes to the promotion system for the larger groups of reserve component officers is up and running, personnel officials plan to institute a similar system

for reserve component chaplains and Medical Department officers. The plan is to start that new promotion

system starting in fiscal 2006, or next Octo-E-mail Lisa Burgess at: burgessl@stripes.osd.mil

Christmas tradition remembers pre-Bulge Mass

WWII service was last one for many of 300 American soldiers attending

By KEVIN DOUGHERTY

Stars and Stripes

MAASTRICHT, Netherlands Written in charcoal, the names on the wall grip a visitor the same way the vise of war led 300 U.S. Army soldiers to squeeze into a cave on a cold winter night six decades ago

Charmed by the Christ child and all too anxious to pray for peace, they gathered in a cave behind a monastery for a candle-light Mass on Christmas Eve. They met in the cave because it was safe from shelling, and the sounds of war couldn't be heard.

When the service ended, they grabbed a piece of black charcoal and scrawled their names on the white rock wall.

Many were kids, about to re-turn to the front and not sure what was waiting for them around the bend.

"I can't imagine what their thoughts were during that service; they were so far from home," said Lt. Col. J.G.M. van der Krabben, a Dutch air force Catholic chaplain. "There were a lot of questions in their minds."

Van der Krabben spoke of the "darkness of the cave, but also of the darkness of

their future." In that dimly lit cave in southern Netherlands, with war on the horizon, they sought the light of Christmas, and all its promise

Vears later others follow their footsteps into the cave on Christmas Eve. creating a growing and during tradition that is as heartfelt as it is humbling.

The tradition dates to at least 1980, and this year will be no different. On Friday, there will be a 7:30 p.m. candlelight Mass celebrated by van der Krabben and U.S. Army Lt. Col. Scott Borderud, a Protestant chanlain for the 254th Base Sunport Battalion in nearby Schin-

Borderud called it an honor to celebrate the Mass for a second time and said the service illuminates "the strength and the depth of the Dutch memory of how America liberated 1944-45

On Christmas Eve 1944, the men who assembled in the cave knew they would soon leave Maastricht - a rest and recuperation stop as well as a logistics hub to fight in what would become known as the Battle of the Bulge Adolf Hitler's massive counteroffensive in the Ardennes necessi tated a response, and most of the 950 soldiers in the city soon returned to the front.

The troops were joined in the cave by a contingent of 42 monks. Twelve were part of the service and 30 sang as a choir. In an interview recorded before his death, a Dutch monk by the name of van Grinsven recalled that night.

'We drove up that silent road upon the hill that led to the cave, said van Grinsven, a member of the choir. "The soldiers were already present. They looked a little bit strange to me. Not the way I imagined them to be. I was surprised that these rough men could be so pious.

44I can't imagine

what their

thoughts were

during that

service; they

were so far

from home 11

Lt. Col. LG.M.

van der Krabben

Dutch air force

Catholic chaplain

"The Mass was very moving. I couldn't understand their language, vet I could their thoughts. their faces 'Who's going to might be my last Christmas For far too

many, it was Of the 300 soldiers who attended the service, only 50 were alive when the war ended 41/2 months later. Even the Catholic priest from New York

who celebrated the Mass died in combat. Today, only 17 of 300 GIs who attended the Mass are alive.

"The people here are still very thankful of the Americans," said Nito-Alphonse Brüll, chairman of a local nonprofit Dutch foundation that runs the event.

Of primary concern to the foundation is the preservation of the



Above: On Christmas Eve 1944, a Mass was celebrated for 300 U.S. Army troops about to leave Maastricht, Netherlands, for the Battle of the Bulge. After the Christmas Eve Mass, each of the men wrote his name in charcoal on a cave wall. Now, local residents and Americans gather to celebrate a Mass in their honor. Below: This year, the Mass will be celebrated by two military chaplains: U.S. Army Lt. Col. Scott Borderud, left, and Dutch air force Lt. Col. J.G.M. van der Krabben.

wall with the soldiers' names. The wall, near the altar, now has a protective shield in front of it. The donation of 5 euros per tick-

et for the service is "purely for the preservation of the monument, the signatures," said Rita Hoefnagels, one of the Dutch organizers. The wall "is where it all started.

The chances of getting into Friday's service are nil. That's because what began as a Dutch display of gratitude has developed into a major holiday event, one that can only accommodate 300 people because of the size of the cave and the symbolism of that

Tickets are available annually starting in November, said Hoefnagels, who is also a 24th BSB spokeswoman. The public affairs office distributes the BSB's allotment on a first-come basis. The community gets roughly half of the tickets with the rest going to the foundation

The foundation is also raising donations to renovate the site, one that grows more precious each Christmas season

"It's a piece of our history," said van der Krabben, the Dutch chaplain, "and it's a message to us that we should believe in peace for all mankind."

nail Kevin Dougherty at:



Mail room madness

Leighton Barracks post office receiving Christmas packages along with influx of 1st ID gear from Iraq

By STEVE LIEWER Stars and Stripes

WÜRZBURG, Germany - For Mark Altherr and the folks in the Leighton Barracks communi-

ty mail room, the long holiday crunch has just begun Besides the annual avalanche of Christmas packages, the Leighton mail room has been getting dozens of bulky black footlockers full of gear that troops in Iraq are shipping back as the

Würzburg-based 1st Infantry Division and 67th Combat Support Hospital prepare to return to Germa-

The holiday bundles may decline after this weekend but Altherr, the chief mail clerk, expects extra packages from Iraq to more than make up for the difference. The same will hold true at other bases heavily populated with returning 1st ID troops in places like Kitzingen, Schweinfurt, Bam-

Katterbach and

berg, Vilseck. "At least through March, we'll probably have

as much [mail] as we normally have at Christmas," Altherr said. The yearlong deployment, which began last

February, has enormously complicated mail service. When the troops are home, the job is straightforward: handle the incoming mail, and hand it out to customers. Now it's more complex. Some incoming mail

must be forwarded to deployed soldiers, while other mail is shinned to families in the States Some is held in the mail room's little backshop area. As the Middle East tour nears its end. more packages are coming in from both Iraq and the United States, too, as soldiers and families ship goods back home

For some of the 11 civilians and three soldiers working in the mail room, getting the mail to and from Iraq is more than a job. It's personal. Four of them — Altherr, Duane Warnke, George Cortes and Cammie McDonald — have snouses serving downrange

"Everything is close to home for me. Every letter belongs to a person," said Altherr, whose wife, Maj. Catherine Altherr, works on the 2nd

"They're not here, but they're not forgotten." Through it all, they maintain a dogged good cheer that is far from the surly stereotype of postal workers. On Christmas Eve, they plan to stay open into the evening until all customers who want to have picked up their packages.

"I have never dealt with a post office where every single person behind the counter is so nice," said Deborah Davis, a military wife for 18 years. "They help you take your packages out to

the car. And you don't have to ask." Some of the new workers signed up because they heard the mail room was a fun place to

"I come in half an hour early every day. The atmosphere is great," said Garrison Pollard, who joined the staff in November.

"It's probably been the best part of my deployment," said Sgt. Heather Lopez, an Army reservist who has served the last three months of a one-year Germany tour in the mail room. "Everybody works really hard and gets the job



Garrison Pollard stacks boxes and footlockers in the community mail room at Leighton Barracks in Würzburg, Germany, The yearlong deployment of the Würzburg-based 1st Infantry Division has boosted mail volume — especially now that the troops are shipping personal items home before their return.

Ex-Air Force lawyer gets more punishment

BY JOHN J. LUMPKIN The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The Air Force's recently dismissed top military lawyer was reprimanded further Wednesday and ordered to forfeit some of his pay for carrying on inappropriate relationships and committing other violations of the military

Maj. Gen. Thomas J. Fiscus was cited for conduct unbecoming an officer, fraternization, obstruction of justice and violating a lawful general regulation, the Air Force said in a statement. He was punished outside of the court-martial process "The swift and strong actions

of Air Force leadership make it clear that such misconduct will not be tolerated, regardless of the rank of the offender," the statement said.

An Air Force official who would speak only on condition of anonymity said an investigation determined Fiscus conduct ed this series of relationships, some of which were sexual, with women over several years. Some involved subordinates, leading to the fraternization charge, the official said.

Fiscus plans to retire. Gen. Donald G. Cook, the commander of the Air Education and Training Command who was given responsibility for the Fiscus case, recommended Fiscus retire below his current rank, meaning he could lose some retirement benefits. His status as an attorney may also face re-

Fiscus, an Air Force Academy graduate, had been the service's judge advocate general since February 2002. He had about 1,600 lawyers under his command

He was relieved, at his re quest, on Sept. 22, when the in vestigation into his conduct

Study: Iraqi forces unable to operate on own until 2006

BY WALTER PINCUS The Washington Post

WASHINGTON - Pentagon figures show that the training of Iraqi military and police units has improved since the summer but that those forces will not be prepared to undertake security missions on their own until late 2006 at the earliest, according to a study released Tuesday by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"Changes in the way the U.S. is preparing Iraqi forces may ... cre-ate the kind of Iraqi forces that are vital to both Irag's future and any successful reductions in U.S. forces and U.S. withdrawals from Iraq." Anthony Cordesman says in the latest in a series of papers he has produced as a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies

"It is not clear that these (new

training) steps can overcome the legacy of past neglect and failure, but they do offer serious hope, adds Cordesman, a former Pentagon official who has made several trips to Iraq.

Cordesman describes as "tragic" a series of U.S. failures in Iraq that created the current problems, including "a failure to react to the growing insurgency in Iraq and for the need for Iraqi military, security and police forces that could be true partners in fighting that

He blames not only the Bush administration's civilian leadership, but also the U.S. military. "In gen-eral," Cordesman says, "the military, as well as the civilians, did not plan for successful conflict termination or stability operations and it focused on early withdrawal rather than the range of missions that might occur." He recalls that

some pre-invasion plans called for "a rapid reduction to 30,000 (U.S.) troops - rather than for an effective stability and security effort.

The Cordesman report provides a background to President Bush's remarks to reporters Monday that the insurgency is "having an effect" and that the training of Ira-gis has produced "mixed" results.

According to figures provided by the Pentagon, the number of trained Iraqi army and police units is far below the number re-

For example, as of Dec. 6, the Pentagon reported that 27,000 trained army troops were needed but that only 3,428 were listed as "trained/on hand." The figures showed that 135,000 police officers were required but that only 50,798 were "trained/on hand."

The Iraqi national guard had a better ratio, with 40.115 troops considered "trained/on hand" of the required force of 62.000.

1st ID soldier saves civilian

A 1st Infantry Division Artillery Regiment soldier recently saved the life of a Department of Defense worker who was choking on his lunch, according to a news release from the division's public affairs office.

Spc. Elspeth Barnett, a combat medic

from San Diego, was eating with other soldiers from her unit in the dining facility at Camp Doha, Kuwait, when the incident occurred. The release said she saw the man

- later identified as Lonnie Allen, a DOD civilian working at Camp Doha - sitting near the end of her table and having difficulty breathing.

Barnett asked if he needed assistance and the man, unable to answer, placed his hand across his neck, indicating distress. Barnett used the Heimlich maneuver, a two-handed squeeze under the breastbone. to immediately dislodge the food.

She then turned the man over to Navy medics, who took him to a base medical

Barnett, who has been nominated for an Army Commendation Medal, had been assigned to Forward Operating Base Summerall near Bayii, Iraq, until her unit moved recently to Camp Doha, the release

From staff reports

Mosul bomber may have worn Iraqi army uniform

BY MATT KELLEY

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The U.S. commander in northern Iraq, Brig. Gen. Carter Ham, said Thursday that the suicide homber who killed 13 U.S. servicemembers in Mosul on Tuesday likely was wearing an Iraqi military uniform.

Tuesday's explosion killed 22 people, injured scores more and put Pentagon officials on the defensive against new criticism of holes in the protections

for troops in Iraq. Speaking to CNN on Thursday, Ham said the in-

vestigation into the bombing was continuing.
"We don't know exactly how it happened. [the investigators'] very best judgment, the explosion was caused by a device that was inside the facility. The question now turns to, 'How did that happen?

"What we think is likely ... is that an individual in an Iraqi military uniform, possibly with a vest-worn explosive device, was inside the facility, and detonated the facility, causing this tragedy.

Ham was questioned as to what steps he was taking to recheck people entering the base

"I think we have a good procedure to do that, but clearly in this instance, I failed to identify some shortcoming that allowed this to occur. That's why we're doing the investigation, to find out: Where was that seam that these murderers were able to exploit?

Ham conceded that the attack was effective "It is an enemy success, and they are clearly using that ... as a rallying call."

Ham said he was concerned that the bombing could be used as a recruiting tool and the chance that other individuals would attempt "copycat at-tacks."

The attack inside a U.S. Army mess hall represents a breach of the most basic principles of military security and points to significant weaknesses in the screening of Iraqis who are allowed onto the base, experts say

This is an incredible occurrence, that someone could have come in undetected with some kind of bomb," said Mitch Mitchell, a retired Army officer who helps design security training for the military. "It blows my mind that force protection on the base is that poor

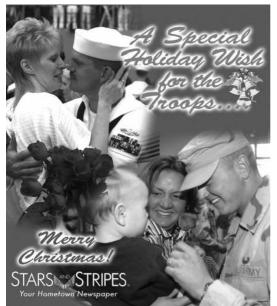
Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld defended U.S. troop security in Iraq, saying it was "an enormous challenge to provide force protection.

'They have to be right 100 percent of the time," he said at a Wednesday press conference. "An attacker only has to be right occasionally."

Mitchell and other experts said it was obvious the military was not taking basic protective actions for U.S. troops in Iraq. On most bases, troops have their meals in large dining hall tents like the one attacked Tuesday, for example, instead of in small, scattered groups. That presents a tempting target for insurgents, Mitchell said.

"It shows you the level at which force protection was addressed on that base, and it wasn't very high," said Mitchell, an analyst with the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the military's National Defense University.

Stripes editor Pat Dickson contributed to this report from Washington.





A man argues with a U.S. and Iraqi soldiers as he waits to be allowed to enter Falluiah on Thursday, as the first of the town's 300,000 resints who fled last month's U.S.-led offensive started returning.

Fighting erupts in Fallujah

BY NICK WADHAMS The Associated Press

FALLUJAH, Iraq - U.S. Marines battled insurgents in Fallujah on Thursday, with warplanes dropping bombs and tanks shell-ing suspected guerrilla positions in the heaviest fighting in weeks, erupting as the first residents re-

turned to the devastated city. At least three Marines were killed in the area, the military said. The fighting was the heaviest in Fallujah since Dec. 10, when seven Marines, three Iraqi troops and about 50 insurgents were killed. The former insurgent

stronghold has seen sporadic violence, including artillery and small-arms fire, since the United States captured it in a weeklong offensive last month.

F-18 fighter-bombers were seen striking at targets in the city's outskirts. Tank and artillery fire also was heard.

U.S. officials said Marines and insurgents were killed in the Fallujah fighting. A military spokeswoman said three Marines were killed in action Thursday in Anbar province, which surrounds Fallujah.

American commanders have hailed the November offensive to retake Fallujah as a major tactical victory. But pockets of insurgents remain in the city - and violence elsewhere in Iraq has escalated since the capture of Fallujah, after many guerrillas apparently slipped out of Fallujah to operate in central and northern Iraq.

A U.S. soldier also was killed Thursday by a roadside bomb in Baghdad, the military said.

The new Fallujah fighting came as the first group of return-ing residents lined up at checkpoints into the city, brandishing documents to prove to Iraqi policemen that they had the right to enter. Once in the city, returnees visited the remains of bombedout and looted homes they fled along with most of Falluiah's population of approximately 250,000

U.S. deaths in Iraq

As of Wednesday, at least 1,321 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,021 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said

The figures include three military civilians.
The AP count is 20 higher than the Defense Department's tally,

last updated at 10 a.m. EST Wednesday. The military has not yet included fatalities from Tuesday's attack on a dining hall near Mosul,

The latest deaths reported by the military:

A Marine died in a vehicle accident Tuesday in Irag's Anbar

province.

The latest identifications reported by military officials and Maine Gov. John Baldacci:

Manne Gov. John Badiacact:

Mrny Spc. Thomas John Dostie, 20, Somerville, Maine, and
Army Sgt. Lynn Robert Poulin Sr., 47, Freedom, Maine; killed Tuesday in an attack on a mess hall near Mosul, Iraq; assigned to Head-quarters Company, 133rd Engineer Battalion, Maine Army Nation-

■ Army Sgt. 1st Class Paul D. Karpowich, 30, Bridgeport, Pa.; killed Tuesday in an attack on a mess hall near Mosul, Iraq; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 417th Regiment, 1st Brigade, 98th Division, Pennsauken. N.J

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Neil D. Petsche, 21, Lena, Ill.; died Tuesday after a non-hostile vehicle incident in Iraq's Anbar province; as-signed to 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Army Staff Sgt. Donald B. Farmer, 33, Zion, Ill., and Army Sgt. Berry K. Meza, 23, League City, Texas; died Sunday in Shuaybah, portation Battalion, 13th Corps Support Command, Fort Hood, Texas.



An unidentified soldier is removed from an ambulance by medical personnel during a snow storm at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany on Wednesday evening. The servicemember was wounded in an attack on a dining facility in Mosul, Iraq.

Most wounded in Mosul expected to fully recover

BY BEN MURRAY Stars and Stripes

LANDSTUHL, Germany — Of-ficials at the U.S. military's primary medical hub for troops wounded in Iraq said Thursday that all soldiers and civilians sent to the hospital after Tuesday's deadly attack on a dining area near Mosul, Iraq, are expected to survive, and most to fully recover.

By midday Thursday, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center had received 35 people hurt in the attack at least seven of them civilians and 17 of whom are still in critical condition, said the hospital's commander, Col. Rhonda Cornum

Cornum said she did not vet have an accurate count of how many civilians had come in on a flight that arrived Thursday morning, or which U.S. contractors they worked for in Iraq.

The hospital began receiving patients early Wednesday morning following an explosion that tore through a U.S. mess tent crowded with soldiers, civilian workers and Iraqi security forces. The blast killed 22 people, including 13 U.S. soldiers. Seventy people were injured in the attack, which military officials say was caused by an improvised explosive device

Cornum said Landstuhl has already moved some of the wounded, including six critical cases, to Army medical centers in the United States, and expects the majority of the remaining patients to arrive at stateside hospitals by Monday.

The hospital is trying to get as many of the troops to U.S. hospi-tals by Christmas Day, Cornum said. Military officials even added an extra flight out of Germany on Saturday to get the wounded closer to their families for the holiday.

The bombing, which created the

tal from any single attack since the start of the war, produced a multitude of injuries rarely seen by Landstuhl doctors, Cornum said,

Many troops had neck, chest and abdomen wounds, which are normally protected against in IED attacks by body armor. Wounds suffered by those hurt in the explosion made it clear that they were caught unprepared for an attack when they sat down to eat lunch Tuesday, she said.

"It was obvious that these people were not wearing their battle armor," said Cornum, who had performed a surgery herself Thursday morning.

U.S. "battle rattle" generally deflects serious wounds to the torso and results in injuries to the arms and legs, she said, though there were "a couple of amputations, among the wounded at Landstuhl.

None of the injuries seen at the hospital, however, provided any insight into the type of device used in the attack, which Pentagon offi-cials said Wednesday they suspected was a suicide bombing.

Most patients arriving at the facility had already undergone surgery at medical centers in Iraq or Kuwait before being stabilized for the flight to Germany, and evidence of their original wounds has generally been "obliterated by the

time they are here," Cornum said.
"It's hard to say what the injury looked like when they started," she said

The rush of patients and the high percentage of critical cases flown to the hospital just days before Christmas put a strain on Landstuhl medical workers. though they met the challenge with poise, Cornum said.

Hospital staff, which has treated more than 21.500 troops for all types of injuries since U.S. military operations began in Afghanistan in 2002, worked extra hours to care for the wounded. Medical teams around the region were kept on two-hour alert in case more were

As of Thursday afternoon, no further patients with battle injuries from the Mosul attack were expect-ed to arrive at Landstuhl, Cornum

E-mail Ben Murray at: murrayh@mail.estrines.osd.mil

Troops reflect on attack that killed 22 comrades

44 I don't mean

to sound

heartless

about it, but

it's something

uou can't

think about

too much.

Sgt. Charles Carter

talking about the attack

on a U.S. base in Mosul

BY JOSEPH GIORDONO Stare and Strings

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq — Unsettling as it is, most U.S. troops understand, if not accept, the possibility of being wounded or killed in direct com-

But in the wake of the deadly strike on a base dining facility near Mosul, soldiers are talking more than ever about what amounts to a

lucky shot, or worse Random mortars and rockets hit U.S. bases throughout Iraq. More often than not,

they land harm lessly in empty spots inside the "But if just one of those hits a trailer or a

[Tactical Operations Center] or a chow hall, what are you going to do?"

Charles Carter, a 24-year-old 1st Cavalry Division soldier sta-tioned at Camp Liberty, formerly called Camp Victory

"You can be wearing full battle rattle, or you can be stand-ing in your towel shaving. If it's going to hit you, it's going to hit you," Carter said.

"I don't mean to sound heartless about it, but it's something that you can't think about too

The same goes, he said, for the roadside bombs and car bombs that have become one of the main threats to servicemem-Now with military officials

saving a suicide bomber was

the likely cause of the Mosul blast, soldiers say they have another tactic to consider.

By Wednesday, new uniform regulations were in place at bases throughout Iraq. Soldiers and civilians at Camp Liberty, for instance, said they were or-dered to wear their helmets and body armor outdoors at all times. Many people wore their body armor the whole time they were in the dining facilities.

Outside one large chow hall, soldiers in-creased scrutiny of people entering and di-rected servicemembers and civilians out of a patio-like area routinely used as a smoking stop meals.

"Sorry for the inconvenience, said one of the soldiers on duty. "You all know what happened yester-day. It's for

your own safety."
On Camp Liberty, officials had already been enforcing strict rules against taking things into and out of the dining facili-Soldiers had previously joked that the measure was meant to keep them from smuggling extra drinks or food out.

Most weren't joking any

"The thing in Mosul is what everyone's afraid of, but hopes never happens," said Spc. John Stack of the 10th Mountain Division, also at Camp Liberty.
"Was it a lucky shot? If so. there's not much anyone could have done."



Rumsfeld 'truly saddened' by criticism

Defense secretary offers passionate defense of himself against detractors' recent comments

BY JOHN J. LUMPKIN The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, stung by criticism that he's insensitive to the needs of the troops and their families, of-

defense

saying



he is "truly sad-dened" that anyone could doubt his commitment to the welfare of U.S. troops. The normally stoic

Rumsfeld said when he meets wounded soldiers or relatives of those killed in battle,

"their grief is something I feel to my core." "I am truly saddened by the thought that anyone could have the impression that I, or others here, are doing anything other than working urgently to see that the lives of the fighting men and women are protected and are cared for in every way humanly possible," he said.

"And I hone and pray that every family member of those who have died so bravely knows how deeply I feel their loss.

Rumsfeld has been a lightning rod since the war began in March 2003, but criticism recently intensified after a Tennessee National Guardsman in Kuwait asked him during a question-and-answer session with soldiers on Dec. 8 why he and his comrades had to scrounge for armor to protect their vehicles

Rumsfeld gave an extended answer that included the statement. "You go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you

might want or wish to have. Critics called the response insensitive and castigated him for not doing more to prepare the U.S. military for the Iraqi invasion and its aftermath.

The following week, some Republicans joined Democrats in voicing dissatisfaction

with Rumsfeld

Sen. John McCain, an Arizona Republican, said he had "no confidence" in Rumsfeld citing the defense secretary's handling of the war and the failure to send more troops, Sen. Trent Lott, a Missouri Republican, said he believes Rumsfeld should be gone within a year. Neither directly called for his resignation.

The defense secretary was criticized again last weekend when it was reported that he did not personally sign letters of condolence to the families of dead soldiers, but instead relied on a mechanical device to affix his signature. He immediately abandoned the practice.

"My goodness, that's the least that we could expect of the secretary of defense, is having some personal attention paid by Sen. Chuck Hagel, a Nebraska Republican, said Sunday

The next day, President Bush defended Rumsfeld, who has agreed to stay on for Bush's second term, saying his defense secretary was "doing a very fine job."

A CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll released Monday found 52 percent of respondents believe Rumsfeld should resign, and 41 percent approve of his job performance. People were evenly split on Rumsfeld's performance in May, but most approved of his handling of the job about a year ago.

On Wednesday, Rumsfeld said, "I, and I know others, stay awake at night for concern for those at risk, with hope for their lives, for their success. And I want those who matter most, the men and women in uniform and their families, to know that. And I want them to know that we consider them, the soldiers, the sailors, the airmen, the Marines, to be America's true treasure. And I thank them and I thank their fami-

Asked whether the criticism had undermined his ability to do his job, he said, You get up in the morning and you think about what our troops are doing. And I must say, if they can do what they're doing, I can do what I'm doing."

Virtual reunions lift up airmen

BY STEPHEN SINGER The Associated Press

CHICOPEE, Mass. - Air Force reservists from Connecticut and Massachusetts got an early Christmas gift Wednesday, taking a break from wartime duties in southwest Asia to recon

nect with their families in a video teleconference. The families of six reservists gathered in a conference room at Westover Air Reserve Base, where a television showed their loved ones in an undisclosed location. Another television brought the images of the loved ones to

the reservists. Master Sgt. Gerard Leamy of

Manchester, Conn., told his wife he was not crying as he brushed aside something on his cheek. He claimed it was dust.

Leamy, a mail carrier who has been overseas since September, said the Christmas season has not yet reached the war zone. "Out here, it's just another

day," he said. "On Christmas, we'll realize it."

His wife, Joyce, said she has "a lot to deal with as a single parent

at home. "We're not used to doing this kind of stuff as regular people,"

Joyce Leamy said.

Intimacy was nonexistent for the families as news reporters crowded into the conference

room at the start of one telecon-

"Oh my gosh," Joyce Leamy said upon seeing her husband's image on TV. "It's amazing. Say something," she commanded her husband.

"Merry Christmas," he replied. For the airmen, whose location was not disclosed by the Air Force for security purposes, it was a chance to communicate with their wives and children in a more familiar format than

The mission of the servicemen, who are assigned to the 58th Aerial Port Squadron from the 439th Airlift Wing, is to conduct air transportation processing and

Jacob Leamy, 8, of Manchester, Conn., wipes tears from his eyes Wednesday during a video teleconference chat at Westover Air Force Base, Mass., with his father, Master Sgt. Gerard Leamy, while sitting on the lap of his mother, Joyce. At right is Jacob's sister Corey, 15.

handle cargo and passengers supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. They are expected to return home next month, the Air Force stances they face.

The servicemen said nothing about their work or the circum-

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GI's fund-raiser denied

MORGAN HILL, Calif. - An unusual flap has erupted between an Army Reserve unit and an Iraq-bound reservist who hopes to raise money for military equipment he wants to bring to the war

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Sean Flynn, 18, planned to buy extra equipment for himself and two friends by selling his San Francisco 49ers memorabilia, including a commemorative football and a jersey autographed by Jerry Those plans ballooned into a

full-blown fund-raising effort orga-nized by a local sports store to better equip Flynn's whole unit - an effort that has angered military

When news of the plan reached the unit — the Mountain View-based 445th Civil Affairs Battalion — officials insisted its soldiers had all the computer equipment and armor they need.

You can't put on a uniform and solicit money - the Army is not a fund-raising business," said Maj. Barbara Kuhn, spokeswom-an for the battalion. "And there was concern that the money raised was going to be used for their personal benefit." Flynn's plan got noticed when

he took his 49ers gear to Fan Club Sports, a memorabilia shop in San Jose. Upon hearing of the motive, the store's owners and many customers decided to organize an online auction and fund-raiser to benefit Flynn's unit.

From The Associated Press

IN THE STATES

Ex-governor pleads guilty in corruption case

BY MATT APUZZO AND JOHN CHRISTOFFERSON The Associated Press

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — Former Gov. John G. Rowland, driven from office by a corruption scandal, pleaded guilty Thursday to a single federal charge that carries a sentence of up to five years in prison

After reaching a deal with prosecutors. Rowland pleaded guilty to one count of con-spiracy to steal honest service, a felony that also carries a possible \$250,000 fine.

The plea deal ends the two-year-long in vestigation into corruption in the adminis-tration of Rowland, who resigned July 1 after 9½ years in office. Rowland's lawyer, William F. Dow III, acknowledged the former governor was "the recipient of certain gratuities.'

Connecticut's John Rowland could face up to five years in prison

Prosecutors told the judge that Rowland accepted \$107,000 worth of vacations, work on his cottage and free flights from state contractors and others.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Nora Dannahey said the single charge also involves a conspiracy to defraud the Internal Revenue

U.S. District Judge Peter Dorsev advised Rowland that as a convicted felon he would not be able to vote or hold public of-

"There was an effort being made to deprive Connecticut citizens of the honest ser vices of its officials." Dorsey said.

Federal guidelines call for a sentence of 15 to 21 months in prison, the lawyers involved said. Sentencing was set for March In addition to the possible sentence and fine, prosecutors said he could be forced to pay more than \$35,000 to the IRS in unpaid taxes and interest.

"Obviously mistakes have been made throughout the last few years, and I accept responsibility for those," Rowland told reporters after entering the plea. "But I also ask the people of this state to appreciate and understand what we have tried to do over the past 25 years in public service.

The written plea agreement does not require Rowland to testify against others.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell, who took office after Rowland stepped down, said she felt "deep

personal disappointment."

Rowland, 47, was once one of the GOP's rising young stars. He became engulfed in scandal in December 2003 when he admitted accepting renovations at his lakeside cottage - including a hot tub and new heating system from employees and state contractors — and lying about it. Other gifts and favors soon came to light.

Rowland resigned amid legislative hearings that threatened to lead to his impeachment. Rell will fill the remainder of his term, which expires after the November 2006 elections.

Airports to adjust their pat-down procedures

By SIORHAN McDONOUGH The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - In response to numerous complaints from women, the government has ordered airport security personnel to avoid touching female passengers between their breasts when performing patdowns

Security screeners now will keep their hands to the "chest perimeter" of women unless detection equipment picks up the possibility that they are hiding explosives between their breasts

The new method takes into con sideration passenger discomfort while remaining steadfast in mitigating risks, said Transportation Security Administration spokesman Mark Hatfield.

The nation's 45,000 screeners are being told to pat down the perimeter of the chest, backsides and abdomen, effective Thurs-

TSA has made other modifications. Last week it began allowing passengers to lower their arms after the first part of a search so they can be more comfortable.

Women have complained about the intrusiveness of the

Roughly 2 million passengers a week are patted down. Some are searched this way after setting off metal detectors twice: others are chosen by computer.

The government has directed airport screeners to carry out more frequent, more thorough searches for explosives. That policy was instituted Sept. 22, after 90 people were killed in two plane crashes in Russia believed to have been caused by Chechen women who carried explosives on board.

For female passengers, screeners would use the back of the hand to pat down the center line of the chest and follow the bra line below the breast



Don Wilmoth uses a snow blower to clear more than eight inches of snow in front of his home in Columbus, Ind., Wednesday. Heavy snow fell Wednesday morning across southern and central Indiana in the first wave of a winter wallop that was expected to dump as much as a foot of snow in some places.

Frigid temperatures disrupt travel

BY KIMBERLY HEFLING The Associated Press

EVANSVILLE, Ind. - Frigid temperatures, blasting wind and more snow than some places normally see in a year left parts of the Midwest and South paralyzed Thursday, and transformed a section of highway in southern Indiana into a parking lot.

The winter storm dumped double-digits of snow from Ohio to Wyoming, the Texas Panhandle to the Great Lakes, disrupting pre-Christmas travel. Motorists in parts of Mississippi and Tennessee were warned Thursday to stay off highways iced up from freezing rain. Hundreds of thousands lost power in Ohio.

'We're still stuck here. It's been about 13 hours," Ken Sabatini, 52, of Leawood, Kan., said Thursday morning. He, his wife and two children were traveling to Cincinnati for Christmas. "It's cold outside and we're doing our best to stay inside the car.'

Temperatures fell to 12 degrees overnight, and Sabatini said some motorists had run out of gas and were sleeping in a stranded Grevhound Bus to stay warm.

The Indiana National Guard was bringing stranded motorists from Interstate 64 to hotels in Evansville or the Red Cross offic-

Gov. Joe Kernan declared a disaster emergency for portions of the state and urged a delay in Christmas travel to allow time for roads to be cleared

The traffic snarl began when semis had trouble getting up hills and rolled back, blocking traffic, police said. A similar problem tied up traffic on a stretch of Interstate 71 in Kentucky.

44 We're still stuck here. It's been about 13 hours.

Ken Sahatini trapped in Ohio while trying

to get to Cincinnati

The Wednesday snowfall at Evansville of 19.3 inches shattered the record for any single day, set Feb. 25, 1993, when 10.9 inches fell. It was also well over the normal yearly total of 14.2

Paducah, Ky., got 14 inches more than the yearly norm of 10, and state police closed down a 13-mile stretch of the I-64 in both directions west of Louisville

Ohio was a patchwork: up to 16 inches of snow in some places. but a combination of snow, sleet and rain in the northeastern part of the state. Electric companies

serving most of the state said 310,000 homes and business were without power. In Illinois, where up to 20 inch-

es of snow fell, forecasters warned that wind chills would reach as low as 25 below zero, d high snowdrifts created a ha ardous morning commute, offi-

Cincinnati was looking at about 20 inches before the system, with its high winds and freezing temperatures, moved on.
Parts of Arkansas looked for-

ward to only the ninth white Christmas in 120 years as the storm barreled across the state.

As arctic air surged southward into the Mississippi Valley, a combination of freezing rain and sleet made driving treacherous across northern Mississippi. The Highway Patrol urged motorists to sus-pend their travel "at least until pend their travel midmorning," said agency spokes-man Warren Strain.

At least seven weather-related traffic deaths were reported — three in Ohio and one each in New Mexico, Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma.

Nine people received minor injuries in a series of accidents on a snowy interstate in Wyoming just of the Colorado state line

In Amarillo, Texas, 3.7 inches of snow fell Wednesday, more than triple the previous record for the date. Hundreds of flights were grounded and others de-layed Wednesday at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

Governor recount

OLYMPIA, Wash. - Democrats allowed themselves to celebrate a little and Republicans vowed to keep fighting as Democrat Christine Gregoire captured a 10-vote lead in the hand recount of the nearly 3 million ballots for Washington's governor.

After losing two previous tallies. Gregoire is now expected to beat Republican Dino Rossi. A Wednesday state Supreme Court decision allowing Democrat-heavy King County to count 700-plus belatedly discovered ballots will likely widen her margin of victory. Gregoire was not declaring

- not yet.

Republican officials say they will blanket the state over the next week looking for Rossi voters whose ballots were mistakenly disqualified, and will ask county canvassing boards to reconsider those bal-

Slain pregnant woman

KANSAS CITY, Mo. - The woman accused of strangling a mother-to-be and cutting the from her womb often faked being pregnant to get attention, even though she had her tubes tied 14 years ago, according to her ex-husband

Carl Boman, of Bartlesville, Okla., told Kansas City television station WDAF-TV on Tuesday that he thinks his former wife, Lisa M. Montgomery, became so wrapped up in her pregnancy story that she needed to come up with a baby to save face.

Montgomery charged with the death of Bobbie Jo Stinnett, 23, who was found dying in her Skidmore, Mo., home Dec. 16. The baby Stinnett had carried for eight months was missing.

The baby and Montgomery, 36, of Melvern, Kan., were found the next day. Family and friends said she tried to pass off Stinnett's baby as her

Montgomery has been incapable of having a baby since having her tubes tied in 1990 after delivering a baby girl, according to her ex-husband.

From The Associated Press



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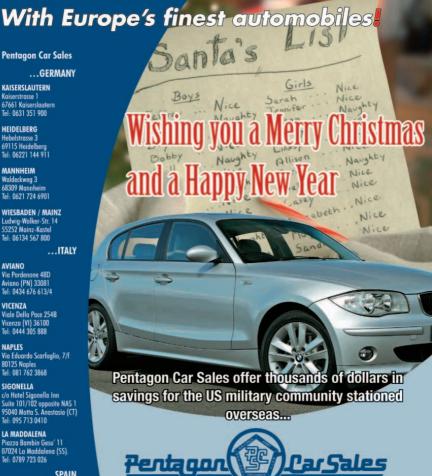
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Study: Obesity a health risk even in active women

BY JANET MCCONNAUGHEY

NEW ORLEANS — Being fit but fat isn't good enough. Excess weight, all by itself, can take years off your life, even if you get plenty of exercise, a study found.

"There has been some suggestion that if you are particularly active, you don't have to worry about your body weight, about your diet. That's very misleading," said the report's lead author, Dr. Frank Hu of the Harvard School of Public Health.

The study of 116,500 women was published in Thursday's Net England Journal of Medicine and was based on questionnaires used in the Nurses' Health Study, which has followed female nurses since 1976, and on death certificates and medical records.

Women who were physically active but obese had almost twice the risk of death of women who were both active and lean Women who were sedentary but slender were 55 percent more

likely to die early.

Women who were both sedentary and obese were almost 2½ times more likely to die.

"Being physically active did not cancel out the increased mortality of [being] overweight. Being lean did not counterbalance the risk effect of being sedentary." Hu said.

Ån editorial by David R. Jacobs Jr. and Mark Å. Pereira of the University of Minnesota noted that the study relied on nurses 'reports of exercise and weight rather than direct measurement, and did not include light to moderate exercise — the form most Americans get.

Dr. Timothy Church of the Cooper Institute, which is devoted to research on exercise and health, praised the findings.

"If you're lean but you're sedentary, don't fool yourself. You're still at risk. You need to get physically active," he said.

\$50,000 feline clone spurs ethics debate

BY PAUL ELIAS

SAN FRANCISCO — The first cloned-to-order pet sold in the United States is named Little Nicky, a 9-week-old kitten delivered to a Texas woman saddened by the loss of a cat she had owned for 17 years.

The kitten cost its owner \$50,000 and was created from DNA from her beloved Maine coon cat, named Nicky, who died last year.

"He is identical. His personality is the same," the owner, Julie, said in an interview. She asked that her last name and hometown not be disclosed because she said she fears being targeted by groups opposed to cloning.

The company that created Little Nicky, Sausalito-based Genetic Savings and Clone, said it hopes by May to have produced the world's first cloned dog — a much more lucrative market than

The kitten's creation and sale reignited fierce ethical and scientific debate over cloning technolo-

gy, which is rapidly advancing.
Commercial interests already
are cloning prized cattle for about
\$20,000 each, and scientists have
cloned mice, rabbits, goats, pigs,
horses — and even the endangered banteng, a wild bull that is
found mostly in Indonesia.

Aside from human cloning, which has been achieved only at the microscopic embryo stage, no cloning project has fueled more



DNA from Nicky, above, a male Maine coon cat who died last year, was used to successfully clone a kitten, right, named Little Nicky, by the Sausalito, Calif.-based company Genetic Savings and Clone. Nicky's owner, a Texas woman identified only as "Julie," paid \$50,000 for his clone.

PHOTOS BY GENETIC SAVINGS

debate than the marketing plans of Genetic Savings and Clone.

"It's morally problematic and a little reprehensible," said David Magnus, co-director of the Center for Biomedical Ethics at Stanford University. "For \$50,000, she could have provided homes for a lot of strays."

Animals rights activists complain that new feline production systems aren't needed because



thousands of stray cats are euthanized each year for want of homes.

Lou Hawthorne, Genetic Savings and Clone's chief executive, said his company purchases thousands of ovaries from spay clinics across the country. It extracts the eggs, which are combined with the genetic material from the animals to be cloned

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Chia, the safe pet to give for Christmas



BY DAN NEPHIN

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — After checking three stores, Beth Cohnen finally found a must-have Christmas gift for her 10-year-old daughter to give to her uncle: a Chia Scooby-Doo.

It's bound to be \$15 well spent
— he'd asked for it for about five

years in a row. And while the uncle recognizes the humor in the quirky pottery, Cohnen said, Chia Pets aren't for her.

Pets aren't for her.

"I think they're kind of odd," she said.

Over the past two decades, the Chia Pet has grown beyond its marketer's expectations to become a classic kitsch gift.

ome a classic kitsch gift. The company began marketing Chia Pets — the Chia Ram was the first — around Christmas 1982 after purchasing a variation from a man who happened upon the idea in Mexico, said Michael Hirsch, vice president of Joseph Enterprises Inc.

The company kept the trademark name, but revamped the product and packaging and began advertising on television. The hokey "Ch-Ch-Ch-Chia" spot shows children applying the seed mixture to the terra cotta planter. Hirsch realizes that Chia Pets often are given as gag gifts, but

doesn't mind.
"If you would have asked us in
'82 how long it would last, we'd
have said, 'Hopefully through
1983,' "he said. "As soon as the
TV [commercials] started, stores
started calling us, asking us for

more. So who knew?"
In an age of video games and iPods, the simple product has secured a foothold as a holiday gift, though Hirsch isn't exactly sure

But Audrey Guskey, a Duquesne University marketing professor and consumer trends expert who monitors Christmas spending and gifts, said Chia Pets tap into nostalgia, which has become a theme in recent years.

Jonathan Pontell, a pop culture expert and trend consultant who coined the term "Generation Jones" to describe people sandwiched between Generation X and baby boomers, agreed that nostalgia has become populars ince the terrorist attacks in 2001.

"There is something about harkening back to a simpler, less chaotic time," Pontell said.

Generation Jones is partly responsible in part for Chia's success, said Pontell, 46, of Los Angeles. Those born during the period "developed a certain sense of irony" — a defense, he said, from the failed promises of 1960s and 1970s.

"I can remember specifically when Chia Pets came out on the market," he said. "We thought they were so cheesy that they were cool," he said.

New Chia products are added every couple of years and there are about a dozen varieties, including Shrek, Scooby-Doo, an assortment of animals and an herb garden. The company also markets The Clapper, another holiday gift.

Millions of Chia Pets — which are marketed in other countries including England, Germany, France — have been sold, but Hirsch wouldn't be more specific or discuss sales figures.

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Right up Arafat's alley

NEW YORK — Late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat invested \$1.3 million in a company that owns a popular bowling alley in Manhattan, newly released documents show

Arafat made the investment in New York City-based Strike Holdings, owner of Bowlmor Lanes, through a holding company he created called Onyx Funds, Bloomberg Markets Magazine reported Wednesday.

Bowlmor is located in Greenwich Village and is popular with Manhattan hipsters.

News of the investment disturbed some customers at the alley, which advertises on its Web site as an ideal location for bar and bat mitzvahs for Jewish

"If I had known, I wouldn't have come, but I promised the kids," said Steve Saslow, 55.

From wire reports



Stephen Paul Jackson, curator of the Aluminum Tree and Aesthetically Challenged Seasonal Ornament Museum and Research Center, is shown with one of the trees inside the museum in Brevard, N.C.

O tacky tree, o tacky tree!

Curator turns a joke into a movement

BY PAUL NOWELL

The Associated Press
BREVARD, N.C. — The guest book was blank on a recent morn-

ing at the world's only museum for aluminum Christmas trees. It was impossible to tell whether no one had been visiting — or if visitors were simply ashamed to

admit having stopped at a shrine to holiday tackiness.

What began as a joke in 1991, with a single shiny tree retrieved from the trash, has become an obsession for curator Stephen Paul Jackson. The home designer, 48, confesses to fond feelings for his

collection of eversilver trees.
"I really like the retro look of
the 1950s," Jackson said as he led
a lone visitor on a tour of the musseum, which fills part of the lobby
of a college music hall in this
town in North Carolina's western
mountains. "As a designer, I like
their simplicity."

When Jackson started his collection 13 years ago, raising his lone voice in defense of the fake Christmas tree, he unwittingly started a movement.

"I have a group of volunteers and fans who expect to see this every year." he said.

Jackson struggles to keep a straight face as he recites the full name of his museum: The Aluminum Tree and Aesthetically Challenged Seasonal Ornament Museum and Research Center, or ATOM for short.

ATOM for short.

This year's collection includes 30 trees of all shapes and sizes. Jackson even put a satellite museum on tour by shipping 25 more trees to a friend who is displaying

them in Nashville, Tennessee.

In the foyer of Brevard College's Porter Center for the Performing Arts, vintage Christmas
music floats through Jackson's
treasure grove of silver, green
and blue trees. The "Elvis Tree"
has photos of the King hangi
from its branches. The "Tolett
Tree" has copper-colored floats
for ornaments and is adorned
with strands of pink, yellow and

blue shower curtain connectors.

Jackson's first tacky tree was a
joke from a friend. Jackson returned the joke by holding a tackyo
ornament tree-trimming party.
When subsequent annual parties
outgrew Jackson's living room,
he relocated the display, first to
Brevard's American Legion hall
and other locations. This year, he
accepted an offer from the colleve to use the music hall's lobby.

Despite the absence of names in the guest book, Jackson said the museum averages about 100 visitors per day, many of them attending concerts or other events.

Last-minute givers get impulsive

BY STEPHANIE STOUGHTON
The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Debbie Hunt planned to buy a hooded sweatshirt for her son. She got one — plus two shirts.

At the Poesis boutique in Richmond's Carytown shopping disrict, colorful purses drew Ryan Lancaster's eye. Without blinking, the 30-year-old salesman dropped \$300 for hig girlfriend.

Welcome to the desperate time of the impulse buy, readily apparent the final few days before Christmas when it dawns on many consumers that their shopping days are numbered.

And for some last-minute buyers, this short period can be a dangerous time. Confronted by long lines, time constraints and a sea of choices, they are often tempted to purchase on impulse and then sort out their finances later, consumer finance and marketing experts say.

"It's so easy to let your debt get out of control, especially around the holidays," said Michael McAuliffe, president of Family Credit Counseling Service in Rockford,

The National Retail Federation estimates that consumers had yet to complete 18 percent of their holiday spending as of Dec. 19, based on a survey by BIGresearch, perhaps because the two extra days between Thanksgiving and Christmas this year encouraged more people to procrasti-

For most of the year, people walk around with a mental budget, said Suzanne Shu, an assistant marketing professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. But during the holidays, they develop "self-control loopholes" that can expand when they shop without a firm list and at the very

last minute.

One temptation is to buy luxury goods such as Burberry scarves and Fendi purses — items that shoppers might reconsider if they had more time to order gifts online or find a stylish sweater in the right color and size.

Many buyers also reassure themselves that a few furry slippers, scented candles and stocking stuffers won't bust their budgets. But they forget that, by the time they finish buying the little stuff, they could have bought an expensive gift, said Cate Williams, vice president of financial literacy for Money Management International in Chicago.

Gifts of Botox, nose jobs on the rise

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Plastic surgeons say they're working overtime during the holidays reshaping faces, breasts and tummies as husbands and boyfriends give their loved ones the gift of a makeover.

Kendra Schroeder of Pasadena says her husband gave her a \$7,000 breast job as an early Christmas present, and she couldn't wait to get it done.

"I never had breasts, and I wanted something there," Schroeder said. "I feel very loved that he was willing to do that for me."

Cosmetic surgeons are often busy around the holidays because people use time away from work to recuperate. But this year, some surgeons say they're

seeing an uplift in business, possibly due to an improving economy and strong spending on luxuries. Dr. Neal Reisman, associate chief of plastic surgery at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, said staff is working into the evenings and on Saturdays to meet the demand.

Some, like Schroder, come in for major jobs, but others want touchups to get ready for holiday parties. They get Botox injections to eliminate wrinkles or collagen to puff up the lips.

Cosmetic surgery has been on the rise for several

Nationwide, doctors performed 8.3 million such procedures last year, up 20 percent from the year before, according to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery.

The most common surgeries were liposuction, breast augmentations, eyelid jobs, rhinoplasties and breast reductions, according to the trade group. The most common non-surgical procedures were Botox injections and laser hair removal.



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Company gun-shy about touting toy

Christmas pop-culture classic comes wrapped in mystique, controversy

BY MELISSA NELSON The Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. - In pop ular culture, the Red Ryder BB gun is "the Holy Grail of Christmas gifts," but the maker of the present so desperately desired by Ralphie Parker in the movie "A Christmas Story" is gun-shy when it comes to publicity.

"They are a classic American brand, but anytime you talk about selling guns to kids in today's soci-ety, they are pariah," said New York-based toy consultant Chris Byrne, who isn't surprised that Daisy Outdoor Products doesn't boast about the gun's popularity.

Daisy would answer only limited questions and a spokesman emphasized that the company's BB guns are not toys.

"They are not purchased by children and should not be used by young people without adult supervision," said Joe Murfin, Daisy's vice president of marketing. "A BB gun or an air gun is an appropriate Christmas gift assuming the parent making the gift is willing to take the time to work with the young person and teach them gun safety and marksman-

The gun, named for the comic strip cowboy Red Ryder, remained a favorite among children for decades and was the inspiration for the 1983 movie "A Christmas Story," about a young boy in the 1940s who longs for "an official Red Ryder, carbine action, 200-shot, Range Model



Little Rock, Ark., sporting goods store employee Matthew Waton poses with a packaged Daisy Red Ryder BB gun Tuesday. Despite the mass appeal of the BB gun — and being the object of desire for Ralphie Parke in cult fave "A Christmas Story" — the toy's manufacturer is reluctant to publicize the controversial gift.

air rifle with a compass on the stock and this thing which tells

Despite the cult popularity of the movie, and the zest for Daisy and Red Ryder memorabilia among collectors the company has for years shunned publicity.

Recent negative news could

contribute to the company's desire to keep a low profile. Last year, Daisy settled a law-

suit brought by the government that alleged defects in 7.5 million high-velocity, multi-pump pellet-BB rifles marketed to shooters age 16 and up.

Daisy collector Neal Pun-

chard, who wrote a retrospective coffee-table book to mark the company's first century, said it is a shame that such a venerable American institution has gotten overlooked because there is such an anti-gun backlash. "But then, anyway you slice it, they're selling guns to kids," he said.

BY PHYLLIS SPEIDELL

The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, Va.)

The 15-year-old smiled as his

green leaves, waxy white berries and Christmas money in his pock-

Shooting mistletoe from the

treetops is a time-honored tech-

New Jersey's ban on carols sparks debate

BY DAVID PORTER

NEWARK, N.J. - As a Jewish boy growing up in Texas, Joel Schwartzberg performed many traditional Christmas songs in the elementary school choir.

Uncomfortable about singing evangelical versions of songs Night, such as "Silent Schwartzberg kept his lips sealed during those parts. He remem-bers being told by his teacher that he had to sing all the words if he wanted to participate.

Schwartzberg said those memories surfaced this month when the South Orange-Maplewood school district decided to ban instrumental Christmas carols at school-sponsored holiday con-

The Alliance Defense Fund an Arizona-based organization that funds legal actions in cases involving religious expression, is considchallenging South Orange-Maplewood's decision in 'When these school boards

start censoring Christ out of the holidays, they're on the wrong side of the Constitution," said Gary McCaleb, the group's senior counsel. "It's a kind of Orwellian doublespeak, in my mind

Jessica Schneider, a 16-year-old who plays in the ensemble band at Columbia High in Maple wood, called the district's Christmas carol ban "kind of silly."

"Personally, I don't know anyone who objected, and as a student who's part of the school's Jewish population, I would think

I would have," Schneider said. "To me, it's just music and it's giving the community something

to be happy about it. Schwartzberg said a line can be drawn, "When students are compelled to engage in evangelical activities — even without intent or proselytizing - with the alternative being nothing except to sit out, I think that's not appropri-



Joel Schwartzberg holds his daughter, Mylie, at a holiday display in Maplewood, N.J., last week. Schwartzberg says he supports his school district's ban on Christmas carols at school holiday concerts.

nique for harvesting the holiday greenery that usually grows too high for plucking from the ground. For Jay, an enterprising

sonhomore at Western Branch High School in Suffolk, it's a family tradition and a way to earn some money. But this method is by no means

the only way to harvest the traditional holiday smoothing incen-

For the past 16 years, Ron Holmes of Hampton has used a gentler way. The mechanic, who trims trees in his spare time, scrambles as high as 100 feet up trees to hand pick the best boughs.

Mistletoe isn't something people grow. It spreads from tree to tree via birds, especially the cedar waxwing, a migratory bird that loves the berries. Holmes delivers some of the

mistletoe to retailers such as Norfolk Wholesale Floral and gives away even more to friends and co-workers. The profits, usually only a few

hundred dollars, go to the five Holmes children for their Christmas shopping

Program helps moms get home for holidays, and beyond

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Tanya Pickle fought for some semblance of control as Atlanta Falcons football player Warrick Dunn handed her the keys to her new home.

osing battle Tears rolled down the single mother's face as she stammered a surprised "thank you" to the man helping her pay \$115,000 for a place that

she and her two boys can call their own.
"You can cry," Dunn said softly, and that Pickle did, as she toured the three-bedroom, two-bath home, furnished right down to choco

late chip cookies in the cookie jar and a Christ-mas tree in the living room.
"Thank you, thank you," Pickle, 28, kept re-peating before a crowd that included housing of-

icials and her new neighbors. "I love it!" Pickle, who works as a shipping and receiving manager for a small St. Petersburg company, is among 52 single moms and 135 children and de-pendents aided by the Warrick Dunn Foundation's "Homes for the Holidays" program in St. Petersburg, Tampa, St. Louis, Atlanta and Baton Rouge, La.

Dunn, a former Tampa Bay Buccaneer, launched the program in 1997 in memory of his own single mother, who had longed all her life for her own home - and died without having

"This is why the program is so special," Dunn said quietly. "Because you can help other people live their dream."

With the foundation's assistance, Pickle got the home at a discount. Dunn contributed \$5,000, the city gave \$10,000 in the form of a "forgiven loan" that will expire after 10 years; the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development contributed \$37,950.

Pickle put down \$2,000 of her own money and will make total payments of \$611 per month for a mortgage of about \$65,000, according to Karen Cioce, community lending officer for Am-South Bank, who assisted in the closing.

St. Petersburg (FLA.) TIMES/AI

Tanya Y. Pickle weeps after Atlanta Falcons running back Warrick Dunn, right, gave her and her youngest son, Kendrell Miller, a tour of their new home in St. Petersburg, Fla.

IN THE WORLD



In a wide-ranging end-of-year news conference, Russian President Vladimir Putin criticized the plan for elections in Irag, which he said could not be fair amid a continuing U.S.-led occupation.

Putin mulls if U.S. is isolating Russia

BY VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV The Associated Press

MOSCOW Vladimir Putin said Thursday that he valued the partnership of President Bush but voiced suspicion that the United States might be behind what the Kremlin sees as efforts to isolate Russia and even destabilize it.

With Russia already feeling hemmed in by U.S. bases in for-merly Soviet Central Asia and U.S. military trainers in Georgia, Putin has taken issue with Western and particularly U.S. activism in Ukraine, where the presi-dential election that sparked a weekslong crisis goes into a third round this weekend.

His emotions came boiling to the surface during a three-hour Kremlin news conference, during which he took questions from 51 iournalists, nausing occasionally to sip tea from a blue-and-white china cup

Putin was asked for a reaction to an interview in which Polish President Aleksander niewski said that "for every supernower. Russia without Ukraine is better than Russia with Ukraine.

If we interpret this [statement by Kwasniewski] as striving to limit Russia's ability to develop relations with its neighbors, ther it means a desire to isolate the Russian Federation," Putin said.

'I don't think that is the goal of U.S. policy," he said, but added he would ask Bush about it when they meet in Slovakia in February. Putin then blamed the United States for a policy on Chechnya "aimed at creating elements that would destabilize the Rus-

sian Federation." The comments were in line with Putin's increasingly combat-ive attitude toward the West and especially the United States. The Kremlin is convinced that the United States is behind a campaign to install Ukraine's pro-Western opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko at the helm of the nation Russia has always regarded as its main satellite

Putin criticized the plan for elections in Iraq, which he said could not be fair amid a continuing U.S.-led occupation. He also assailed the United States for saying that Chechnya wasn't ready for elections even though it was sponsoring elections in Iraq.

"I have strong doubts that it's possible to create conditions for democratic elections [in Iraq] when its entire territory is occu-pied by foreign troops," he said, denouncing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Eurone's plan to monitor the Iraqi

London stabbings

LONDON - An armed man went on a stabbing rampage in north London on Thursday, killing one person and critically injuring five others, police said

Metropolitan Police said they began receiving reports of stab bings outside a train station and on streets in the Edmonton, Enfield and Harringay areas from amund 8:20 a.m.

Police said the assailant was driving a car and pulling off the road to stab his victims as they walked on busy streets between 8 and 9:30 a m

A 30-year-old man was arrested after police tracked the car's registration number to his north Coffee, not mariiuana

London address.

THE HAGUE, Netherlands Fewer coffee shops are openly selling marijuana and hashish in the Netherlands, the Justice Ministry said Wednesday.

The decline in the number of coffee shops is part of a long-term dip in such shops due to regional laws banning the sale of drugs to minors under 18 and zoning rules keeping such establishments far from schools, said Kitty Pardoel, a Tilburg University researcher.

She said the number of cafes selling drugs has fallen 36 percent since 1997.

From wire reports

Karzai picks new, old faces for seats in Afghan Cabinet

Warlord defense minister replaced by his deputy

BY PAUL HAVEN The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan - President Hamid Karzai chose a new Cabinet on Thursday, heeding calls to sideline warlords from top positions - including the defense minister — and creating a new post to oversee the fight against opium production.

Defense Minister Mohammed Fahim, a prominent Tajik warlord and the head of the northern alliance that helped the United States drive the Taliban from power in 2001, was replaced by his deputy, Abdul Rahim Wardak, according to a decree an-nounced by Karzai on Afghan

state television

The new Cabinet was announced on state-run television but several government officials leaked the list of Cabinet members to The Associated Press hours before the official announcement.

Wardak is a Pashtun who made a name for himself as a commander in the 1980s fighting Soviet occupation, then fled abroad as the country descended into civil war.

Southern warlord Gul Agha Sherzai also was removed from the Cabinet, where he was public works minister

Minister Ashraf Finance Ghani, a former World Bank official credited with securing large commitments of foreign aid, was replaced by Central Bank Governor Anwar ul-Hag Ahadi, a longtime Karzai ally. Ghani was likely to take over as chief of Kabul University, the officials said.

Foreign Minister Abdullah and Interior Minister Ali Ahmad Jalali, both popular in the West, were kept on.

However, at least one regional strongman is joining the government.

Ismail Khan, the powerful western warlord whom Karzai removed as governor of Herat earlier this year, was given the position of water and energy minister

The post is not considered a top-tier position, but Khan's selection is likely to prompt criticism from human rights groups, who want Karzai to crack down on the influence of warlords and build a more professional political class.

Khan was accused of torture

while governor of Herat, but also was credited with bringing stability and relative prosperity to the has region. Karzai tight-rope in trying to limit the influence of the warlords, whose large private armies are still in control of large swaths of the

countryside

In addition to the top spots, a new Counternarcotics Ministry was created, with relative un-known Habibullah Qadari chosen to run it. The position will be closely watched to see if Karzai makes good on a pledge to wipe out opium production. Karzai has recently called for a "holy against the multibillion-dollar drug trade, and said it is a greater threat to the nation than the Tali-

ban or al-Qaida. Karzai also created the new post of economics minister, naming Amin Farhang, the former reconstruction chief

The Cabinet selections are seen as crucial to how this war-ravaged nation will deal with its myriad problems, including a de-stroved infrastructure, a stubborn Taliban and al-Qaida insurgency and a booming opium trade that accounts for three-quarters of the world's market

Dutch intelligence: Radical Islam spreading through Net

THE HAGUE, Netherlands - Intelligence officials warned Thursday that radical Islamic ideolo gy is spreading to thousands of young Dutch Muslims through Internet web sites and on line chat

The Dutch intelligence agency, known by its ac ronym AIVD, identified the potential threat in an overview of domestic fundamentalist Islamic movements compiled for the Home Affairs Minis-

Concerns about radical Islam are rising in Neth erlands after filmmaker Theo van Gogh was shot and stabbed to death last month on a busy Amsterdam street. A letter ninned to his chest with a knife threatened politicians and other "infidel non-

The 60-page report said eight sources of radical Islam pose a threat to the country, ranging from

Salifist mosques openly preaching anti-Western, antidemocratic ideas to an underground political movement encouraging violent jihad, or holy war. "Europe and the Netherlands have been con-

nted with extreme violence," it said, referring to Van Gogh's murder and the train bombings in Madrid in March.

"Recruitment of mainly nonnative Dutch youths for armed radical Islamic holy war is more a trend than an incident. Simply, the internationally shift [to radicalization] has clearly impacted the Dutch situation," it said.

A move away from traditional physical outlets of Islamic ideology — such as mosques — to indi-vidual "virtual" followers on the web makes it harder for authorities to isolate potential threats, the report said.

"Especially the youth have found their way to web sites of radical Islamic spiritual leaders," it said. "These web sites increasingly contribute to the radicalization of Muslim communities in the

Ukrainian security group denies role in poisoning

The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine - Ukraine's security service on Thursday denied any involvement with the dioxin poisoning of Viktor Yushchenko, the country's top opposition leader and leading candidate in Sunday's rerun for the presi-

In a statement posted on its Web site, the State Security Ser-

vice said "it has no relation with the worsening" of Yushchenko's health

'The Ukrainian Security Service did not obtain a single official document that could provide a basis for the establishment of the time or the place or the fact of the candidate's poisoning," the statement said.

In an interview with The Associated Press last week. Yushchenko said he was probably poisoned at a Sept. 5 dinner with security ser-vice chief Ihor Smeshko and his deputy, Volodymyr Satsyuk. Both denied any involvement.

The dioxin dramatically disfigured Yushchenko's face, but he has recovered enough to carry on campaigning.

Prosecutors and a special parliamentary committee are investigating.

Journey to school in West Bank hazardous

Palestinian children need armed escorts

BY RAVI NESSMAN The Associated Press

TUWANI, West Bank — The walk to school for five Palestinian children has become so dangerous they require an escort from Israeli soldiers and police.
Jewish settlers living along the

Jewish settlers living along the path have repeatedly ambushed the young students, settling dogs on them, throwing stones and beating one 7-year-old grid with a stick until she bled, according to the children, their parents, their principal and human rights workers.

ers.
"It's rare that a day passes and there isn't an attempt to pick on the kids or, even worse, hurt them," said Omar Jundiyye, father of three of the children and the uncle of the other two.

The attacks began after the outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian fighting in 2000, when tensions between settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank rose considerably. Dozens of settlers have been



An Israeli soldier and others guard Palestinian students, all members of the Jundiyye family, as they walk past the Havat Maon Jewish outpost settlement on their way home from school. The children were verbally and physically abused when they went to school on their own.

killed in Palestinian shooting ambushes, while settlers on occasion clash with Palestinians and rampage through villages.

The staging ground for the children's misery is the ramshackle settlement outpost of Havat Maon, south of the Palestinian city of Hebron. Two months ago, Israeli forces decided to escon the students, after settlers also attacked international aid workers accompanying the youngsters.

On a recent day, the soldiers warmly greeted their five charges, between six and 12 years old, as they prepared to walk home on a road winding through the rocky, brush-covered hills of the southern West Bank.

The children, carrying over-

sized backpacks emblazoned with cartoon characters, walked in silence as they approached a small clutch of trees that hides Havat Maon. "With the soldiers, at least sometimes I don't feel afraid."

Said 9-year-old Tarek Jundiyye.

But even the armed escorts have not completely stopped the harassment.

As the children walked home one recent afternoon, a settler hiding in the trees screamed curses in Hebrew at them. A soldier stopped to yell back.

When asked about the attacks, a resident of Havat Maon, who only gave his name as Gilad, said by telephone: "This is our country, and they [Palestinians] have no right to be here." He then hung up. Dollar hits a new low against euro

BY DAVID RISING GREW 0.3 percent in November,

The Associated Press

BERLIN — The U.S. dollar hit a new all-time low Thursday against the euro, which reached \$1.3483 after a mixed economic report from the U.S. Commerce Department.

The euro hovered around the previous mark of \$1.3470, set Dec. 7, in light European trading for most of the day before spiking after the report.

The 12-nation currency has risen sharply since September, when it was trading for around \$1.20, over persistent concerns about the ballooning U.S. trade and budget deficits.

With no end to those problems in sight, analysts see the trend continuing.

The euro initially fell against

The euro initially fell against the dollar after its 1999 debut, but it has risen about 63 percent since bottoming out at 82 U.S. cents in October 2000.

The Commerce Department reported that consumer spending grew by a modest 0.2 percent in November, slightly weaker than the 0.3 percent that had been forecast by analysts and far short of the 0.8 percent reported for October. At the same time incomes

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grew 0.3 percent in November, more than the 0.2 percent that had been forecast. Still, income growth was weaker than in October, when it hit 0.6 percent.

The euro spike following the mixed news may have something to do with the small amount of trading just before Christmas, Hughes said

The U.S. administration says it has a "strong dollar" policy but also that it will let market forces set the currency's strength. Most analysts believe the U.S. is content to let the dollar fall because it has been making American exports cheaper.

However, Europe's fragile economic recovery is export-driven, and the strong euro has either been making European goods more expensive overseas or cutting into producers' profits as they try to hold prices steady.

European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet has called the rapid increase in the euro's strength both 'unwelcome' and 'brutal.' However, the bank has yet to take the next step and intervene in currency markets to halt the dollar's slide.

The pound was trading at \$1.9179 and the dollar bought 103.90 Japanese yen at midafternoon in Europe.

Seasons Greetings, Sgt. Delbert Jensen

Your friends and co-workers at Noramco want to wish you a Happy Holiday!



STARS STRIPES.

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Santa unable to reply to mail from kids due to budget cuts

The Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — It's hardly the most wonderful time of the year for Santa and his helpers in Greenland.

And some 25,000 children worldwide who sent the jolly elf their wish list and Christmas card won't find any reply because St. Nick's cash crunch has meant no money for stamps from the local govern-

Since 2002, Santa Claus of Greenland no longer gets the annual 1.7 million kroner (8306,000) from the government to pay for replies to the estimated 25,000 letters he receives every year. The chubby Santa's subsidy was lost amid the island government's overall belt lightening. The company, which is staffed by volunteers, is beside itself. "We have been foreced to do this," said Anders Laesoe, who identified the company of the company of

"We have been forced to do this," said Anders Laesoe, who identified himself as Santa's aide. "It's a sad and terrible thing for children who don't understand this."

Despite the nearness to Christmas Day, Laesoe said Thursday the company, based in Nuuk, Greenland, is looking for help from individuals and sonsors for next year.

Greenland, like Finland, Sweden and Norway, claims to be the real home of Santa and markets him as an ambassador for the island territo-

Fake-degrees problem

HANOI, Vietnam — More than 1,700 policemen in Vietnam have been caught using fake degrees and certificates to get promotions and raises, state-controlled media reported Thursday.

A total of 1,076 got demoted and another 97 were dismissed from the police force for falsifying their education and training, the Pioneer newspaper said.

Some in the police force did not get an official education and they had to go to part-time classes and other training in order to get salary raises, he said.

Major heroin bust

HONG KONG — A Sierra Leone man who swallowed 74 pellets of heroin was arrested at Hong Kong's airport for alleged drug smuggling, the government said Thursday. Customs officers arrested the

Customs officers arrested the 33-year-old man on Wednesday, when he arrived from Pakistan, the government said in a statement. He had planned to travel to the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou.

The suspect will be charged with trafficking in a dangerous drug, the government said.

From The Associated Press

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Salute for a fallen soldier

I am writing to share a recent experience that had a profound impact on me as a sol dier and an American. About a week ago I was redeploying from Iraq to my home station. My team and I had finally gotten a flight on a C-130 to Kuwait. There were five of us, plus three civilians, making a diminutive manifest of eight passengers. But when we arrived at the flight line we were informed that there would be one more.

Accompanying us on our final flight out of Iraq was a fallen soldier. We were advised to speak up if this would be a problem for us, and we would be put on another flight. Of course, we all agreed that getting home as soon as possible outweighed all other factors, and we would take the flight. To be honest, I didn't think it would affect me, but as I walked onto that plane, and saw the casket of my comrade draped with his or her final decoration of the Stars and Stripes, I was overwhelmed with so many emotions it would be impossible to describe.

There were only two that I was able to fully grasp. The first was guilt. It hit me like a wave, almost causing me to take a step back, when I realized that when this plane landed, I would be walking off safe, and never have to return. I would once again see the great country that I had fought for, yet this soldier would never get that chance The second emotion I recognized came midflight. I remember glancing back at the American banner and feeling grateful.

Tell us what you think

Stars and Stripes welcomes your comments on editorials and columns that are published in the newspaper, and values letters on topics of importance in the lives of our readers. All letters must be signed, and must include the writer's address or base and telephone number. Please limit all letters to 300 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, taste and clarity.

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E-mail: letters@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Grateful because I knew that for this brave soldier's sacrifice, the people of Iraq will one day be able to experience the freedom we so readily gave up for that very reason. to share it.

When we landed, our comrade was the first to get off. And as we all stood and raised our fingertips to our brow to show our respect for the whole of America that couldn't be there, I realized something. I realized that although the military might not be for everybody, those of us standing there,

as well as our comrade being helped off, know that freedom is

Spc. Patrick Molitor

The truth is in the stars

It is with amusement and sadness that I read two recent letters to the editor. Two individuals felt the need to defend "the theory of evolution." They did so by attacking the belief in "creationism."

To suggest that creationism is not valid because you can't prove it is partly correct. But that suggestion also shoots down the writer's theory of evolution — because it can't be proven one way or other. He didn't even understand his own argument. Also creationism is not a great idea of modern civilization, but as old as the hills.

The other writer suggested that evolution was equal with gravity, cell theory and cancer study. This was the amusement I found. That plus the comment about rigorous re search. I would think the Rible was plenty of research for creationism. But it is the indi vidual's obligation to find his own beliefs that make this country great. All I need to do is look into the sky in Afghanistan and look at the stars above to know there is a God.

I would prefer to believe in the God who created me, rather than a big bang or de-scending from monkeys. But wait, are there still not monkeys out there? Must be slow on the evolutionary ladder.

David A. Sica Bagram, Afghanistan

Doonesbury (Dec. 24 and 25)









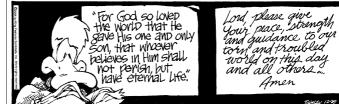








Mallard Fillmore (Dec. 25; for Dec. 24 strip, see Page 17) BY BRUCE TINSLEY



SHECIADI

OPINION

We have met the enemy in Iraq, and he isn't us

BY CLIFFORD D. MAY Scripps Howard

hen the Army of Ansar al Sunna, a group tied to al-Oaida. attacks an American base near Mosul, it should be apparent that Iraq is the front line in the war on terrorism

When Christian churches are bombed, as they were on the same day and in the same part of Iraq, and Shiite mosques in Karbala and Najaf are targeted as well, it should be clear that the bombers are waging a most unholy war

When Iraqi election workers are shot dead in the streets, as they were last weekend, the murderers' hatred for democracy ought to be obvious

Yet somehow the debate goes on about whether those fighting us are really enemies of freedom, about whether it is imperative they be defeated.

The charge that Americans came to Iraq to steal oil is not much heard these days. Instead, the suicide bombers and throat-slitters are romanticized as "militants" - or even "nationalists" and "patriots" — who are "resisting American occupation."

When those "militants" do something particularly barbaric — summarily executing civilians, blowing up police stations, beheading aid workers — the conversation never dwells long on their crimes. Instead, controversy swirls around America's failure to control "the security situation."

Then, too, there are those who do not defend the killers but argue that the continuing carnage proves the United States can't overcome this foe. What's the point of a military machine that can topple Saddam Hussein in a few weeks but has to give Iraq back to his cronies a few years later? Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, much criticized of late, appears to understand this. A few days he frankly acknowledged the urgent need to "develop a military designed to meet the challenges of this era.

The military we have now, he explained, "is, in many ways, still organized, trained and best equipped for the more conventional challenges of the past century, when wars were conducted largely between large navies, armies and air forces."

Our current enemies, by contrast, are fighting an "unconventional" war. The combatants who attacked Forward Operating Base Marez outside Mosul were not attempting to win a battle in the conventional sense; they did not hope to seize the camp any more than the suicide-terrorists who at-tacked on Sept. 11 planned to station tanks in New York and Washington.

Instead, the goal of terrorists is simply to slaughter and, of course, terrorize. By doing, they mean to destroy our will to fight Lose the will to fight and, by definition, you have been defeated, no matter how high-tech your weaponry, no matter how many troops you have riding in armored

On a visit to Iraq this week, British Prime Minister Tony Blair succinctly character-ized the state of this conflict. "There surely is only one side to be on in what is now very clearly a battle between democracy and terror," he said.

"On the one side, you have people who desperately want to make the democratic process work and want to have the same type of

democratic freedoms other parts of the "We have seen ... the weakness of the

world enjoy. And on the other side, people who are killing and intimidating and trying to destroy a better future for Iraq. ... Our response should be to stand alongside the democrats — the people who've got the courage to see this thing through — and help them see it through. I've got no doubt at all that that is the right thing for us to do."

The enemy in Iraq is brutal, ruthless and yes, evil. But they are not stupid. They know that every time they stage a massacre, millions of people get angry, not at them, but at Don Rumsfeld and President Bush and Prime Minister Blair and the "neo-cons."

American soldier who is ... unprepared to fight long wars," Osama bin Laden said in 1998, as he began contemplating his next at-"It also proves they can run in less than 24 hours, and this was also repeated in Somalia. We are ready for all occasions." Only when the kind of butchery we wit-

nessed this week strengthens, rather than weakens, our resolve will the barbarians see that the road they have chosen is a dead end - figuratively and literally.

Clifford D. May is the president of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a policy institute

Laurels for crossing the Delaware are legitimate

WASHINGTON et's get this straight: The greatest Christmas in American history was not the result of the Germans being drunk or hung over. Gen. George Washington lost most of his battles it has been said the

George Will



Revolutionary War was won by brilliant retreating so let's not diminish any of his vic-tories, and certainly not the one without which American independence probably would have been extin-guished like a candle

> Among the many things that "everyone knows" that just are not so is that the 2,400

men of the Continental Army won the Battle of Trenton, an operation that began on the night of Dec. 25, 1776, because the Hessian mercenaries had partaken too vigorously of Christmas drink. According to David Hack-ett Fischer, whose "Washington's Crossing" was a finalist for the 2004 National Book Award, the Hessians were weary from a week of constant vigilance against attacks by local insurgents, but fought well.

Not well enough, however, to prevent

in a gale.

what Fischer, a Brandeis historian, says was — combined, over the next eight days, with a second battle of Trenton and the Battle of Princeton - the most important victory in U.S. military history. Since the Declaration of Independence on July 4, the Americans had lost every battle fought to make independence a fact. The military disasters inflicted by 33,000 British and German troops in what is now Brooklyn, and on Manhattan Is-land, contributed to Washington losing 90 percent of his army. New Jersey's loyalty was tilting toward the crown.

banks of the ice-clogged Delaware River, and making the crossing that became the subject of the most familiar American painting, Washington risked everything. Had he lost the gamble - had his men been repulsed from Trenton and pinned against the - the continent would have been lost and subsequent world history would have been very different.

In New York, Washington had wept while watching through a spyglass as the British massacred Americans who had surren-dered. But Washington, Fischer writes, "often reminded his men that they were an army of liberty and freedom, and that the rights of humanity for which they were fight ing should extend even to their enemies. the American officer in charge of 221 prisoners taken at Princeton, Washington said, "Treat them with humanity, and let them have no reason to complain of our copying the brutal example of the British army in their treatment of our unfortunate brethren." ... As historian Edmund Morgan says, Washington had "made the war itself an example of what the Revolution meant.

Dining with Washington after surrendering to him at Yorktown, Gen. Charles Cornwallis, who had commanded the forces at Princeton that rushed to relieve Trenton, of-fered this toast: "Fame will gather your brightest laurels rather from the banks of the Delaware than from those of the Chesa-

Unfortunately, many small historians be lieve their function is to deny large men any laurels. Fischer sternly reprimands such historians who have "served us ill": "In the late twentieth century, too many scholars tried to make the American past into a record of crime and folly. Too many writers have told us we are captives of our darker selves and helpless victims of our history. It isn't so

One reason Americans have made so much history is that they have never be-lieved in History. One of the unfortunate intellectual developments of the 19th century, principally in Europe, was the transformation of history into a proper noun. It denoted a vast impersonal force with its own unfold-... Marxism was the most consequential doctrine of historical inevitability. but there were others.

Such theories induce fatalism by diminishing mankind's sense of agency. They mock the idea of great people, and the belief that the free choices of small groups could knock History out of its preordained grooves.

Such ideas have largely lost their ability to eize imaginations. ... Still, it is exhilarating to be reminded by historians just how radi cally wrong the historicists were, and are. George Will is a member of Washington Post Writers Group.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



		Updated sports listi	AFR	TS Televisio	n Schedule orts section or AFN's Web si	te at http://myafn.dodmedia.	osd.mil/	
		.,		FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2				
	(AFN-FAMILY)	(AFN-MOVIE)	(AFN-EUROPE)	(AFN-KOREA)	(AFN-NEWS)	(AFN-SPORTS)	(SPECTRUM)	(AFN-PACIFIC)
9:00	Movie "It's a Very Merry Mup- pet Christmas Movie" (2002,	Movie ** "A Season for Mir- acles" (1999) Carla Gugino. A	Dr. Phil	Jeopardy!	Nightline	College Football PlainsCapital Fort Worth Bowl Cincinnati	Burt Wolf: Taste of Freedom	Jeopardy!
9:30	Comedy) Whoopi Goldberg.	woman gives her jailed sister's	(9:46) Oprah Winfrey	Headline News ESPNews	Headline News Hardball With Chris Matthews	vs. Marshall. From Fort Worth,	Easy Entertaining-Chiarello Decorating Cents	Headline News ESPNews
10:00	Santa Claus Is Coming to	children a real Christmas.	(:35) Guiding Light	Headline News	narobali With Chris Matthews	Texas. (Taped)	The Look for Less	Pacific Report
10:30 11:00	Town	(10:54) Movie *** "Amer-	(.55) Guiding Light	How-Grinch Stole Christmas	The O'Reilly Factor		E! News Live	How-Grinch Stole Christmas
11:30	Stanley	ican Graffiti" (1973) Richard	(:17) General Hospital	Movie * * * * "It's a Wonder-	1110 0 110111, 1 00101		The King of Queens	
12:00	Dora the Explorer	Dreyfuss. Teenagers in 1962 California ponder their futures.	Headline News	ful Life" (1946, Fantasy)	Primetime Thursday	i	That '70s Show	Movie **** "It's a Wonder- ful Life" (1946, Fantasy)
12:30	The Wiggles		Judge Judy	James Stewart, Donna Reed. An angel saves a distraught		College Football Pioneer	Girlfriends	James Stewart, Donna Reed. An angel saves a distraught
13:00	Mickey's Christmas Carol	Movie *** "Miracle on	Today Michael Feinstein; It's	businessman from suicide.	Fox and Friends	PureVision Las Vegas Bowl	Charmed "The Day the Magic	businessman from suicide.
13:30	Movie ** * "Miracle on 34th Street" (1994) Richard Atten-	34th Street" (1947, Comedy) Maureen O'Hara. Macy's hires	CojoTime; Kenan Thompson.			UCLA vs. Wyoming. From Las Vegas. (Taped)	Died"	
14:00	borough, Elizabeth Perkins.	Kriss Kringle as a store Santa.		Pacific Report	Fox and Friends		Ally McBeal "Reach Out and Touch"	Pacific Report
14:30 15:00	Funniest Home Videos	(2:47) Movie *** "Parent-	Teacher's Pet (FI)	The Tonight Show	American Morning		Any Day Now M.E. holds out	The Tonight Show
15:30	Full House	hood" (1989) Steve Martin. A	What's New Scooby-Doo?	Late Show	American monning		for a not-quilty verdict.	Late Show
16:00	Pokémon	family experiences the pres-	Ozzy & Drix		CNN Live Today	SportsCenter	ER "A Boy Faling Out of the	
16:30	Yu-Gi-Oh!	sures of raising children.	The Brothers Garcia	Access Hollywood	1		Sky"	Access Hollywood
17:00	Jetsons' Christmas Carol	Faith Hill Revealed	Jeopardy!	Headline News		NFL Game of the Week	Law & Order "Haven"	Headline News
17:30	Christmas Flintstone		Headline News	The Late Late Show				The Late Late Show
18:00	Rugrats Christmas in a moun- tain cabin.	Hollywood Backstories Entertainment Tonight	ESPNews AFN Evening News	Dennis Miller	FOX News	Inside the NFL	The Simpsons	Dennis Miller
19:00	A Scooby-Doo Christmas	Movie +++ "Corneged"	How-Grinch Stole Christmas	Dennis Miller	Primetime Thursday	ESPNews	Everybody Loves Raymond Charmed "Crimes and Witch-	Dennis Miller
19:00	Barbie in the Nutcracker	(1988) Bill Murray, Karen Allen,	Movie *** "It's a Wonder-	Countdown With Keith Olber-	· ····································	NFL Live	Demeanors"	Countdown With Keith Olber-
20:00		A heartless network executive learns the folly of his ways.	ful Life" (1946, Fantasy)	mann	FOX News	ESPNews	Boston Public "Chapter Forty"	mann
20:30			James Stewart, Donna Reed. An angel saves a distraught	Entertainment Studios.com	1	NFL Pregame (Live)		Entertainment Studios.com
21:00	Movie ★★ "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" (2000) Jim	Movie * * "Maid in Manhat- tan" (2002) Jennifer Lopez. A	businessman from suicide.	Good Morning America	Studio B With Shepard Smith		Blue Planet: Seas of Life	Good Morning America
21:30	Stole Christmas" (2000) Jim Carrey. The evil Grinch plots to	tan" (2002) Jennifer Lopez. A politician mistakes a hotel maid				ers at Minnesota Vikings. From the Hubert H. Humphrey	"Seasonal Seas"	
22:00	ruin Christmas in Whoville.	for a wealthy woman.	Headline News			Metrodome in Minneapolis.	Friends	
22:30	Home Improvement	Movie **: "Mo' Money"	The Tonight Show	To Be Announced	Your World With Neil Cavuto Lester Holt Live	(Live)	Seinfeld "The Burning" The Daily Show	To Be Announced
23:00 23:30	Home Improvement	(1992) Damon Wavans.	Late Show	IO DE AMIDUMOEU	Lesier noit Live		Blind Date	IO DE AMINOUNCEU
23.30	rionic improvement		Luic Ollow	SATURDAY, DECEMBER	25 2004	l	Dillio Duic	l
00:00	Rugrats	(11:00) Movie "Mo' Money"	(11:30) Late Show	To Be Announced	Headline News	Gravity Games From Cleve-	Late Night	To Be Announced
00:30	Frosty the Snowman	(:41) Movie + + x "Batman	Access Hollywood	1	NBC Nightly News	land.	" " "	
1:00	A Scooby-Doo Christmas	Returns" (1992, Adventure) Michael Keaton, Michalle Pfeif-	College Football Sheraton		ABC World News Tonight]	Charmed 'Crimes and Witch-	
	Barbie in the Nutcracker	fer. The Catwoman and the	Hawaii Bowl Hawaii vs. Al- abama-Birmingham. From Hon-	Movie ** * "Home Alone" (1990, Comedy) Macaulay	CBS Evening News		Demeanors"	Movie *** "Home Alone" (1990, Comedy) Macaulay
2:00		Penguin join forces against Bat-	olulu. (Live)	Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern.	The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer		Boston Public "Chapter Forty"	Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern.
2:30	Movie * * "How the Grinch	man. Movie *** "Scrooged"		Crystal Cathedral	Hannity & Colmes	Gravity Games From Cleve-	Blue Planet: Seas of Life	Crystal Cathedral
3:30	Stole Christmas" (2000) Jim	(1988) Bill Murray, Karen Allen.		Ci yatai Catiletiiai	naminy a comies	land.	"Seasonal Seas"	Ciyatai Catilediai
4:00	Carrey. The evil Grinch plots to ruin Christmas in Whoville.	A heartless network executive	ESPNews		Headline News	i	Friends	1
4:30		learns the folly of his ways.	ESPNews	1	Nightly Business Report	1	Seinfeld "The Burning"	1
5:00	Elmo Saves Christmas	Movie * * "Maid in Manhat-	Headline News		Lou Dobbs Tonight	1	Breathingspace Yoga	
5:30		tan" (2002) Jennifer Lopez. A politician mistakes a hotel maid	ESPNews				Caribbean Workout	
6:00	Pooh and Christmas	for a wealthy woman.	Headline News Headline News	Frosty the Snowman	Larry King Live	Gravity Games From Cleve- land	Body Shaping	Frosty the Snowman
6:30 7:00	Blue's Clues Colds. Planet's Funniest Animals	Movie ** * "White Christ-	To Be Announced	What's New Scooby-Doo? Movie ** "How the Grinch	NewsNight With Aaron Brown		Every Woman Beautiful Homes-Estates	What's New Scooby-Doo? Movie ** "How the Grinch
7:30	Amazing Animal Videos	mas" (1954) Bing Crosby, Dan-	TO DE MINIOUNICO	Stole Christmas" (2000) Jim	Newsing It with Auton Brown		Curb Appeal	Stole Christmas" (2000) Jim
8:00	Lilo & Stitch "Elastico"	ny Kaye. Four entertainers try to save an innkeeper from ruin.		Carrey. The evil Grinch plots to ruin Christmas in Whoville.	BET Nightly News	1	Landscapers' Challenge	Carrey. The evil Grinch plots to ruin Christmas in Whoville.
8:30	Teamo Supremo (EI)				Tavis Smiley		Weekend Warriors	
9:00	Static Shock "She-Bang"	(:12) Movie **** "Close Encounters of the Third		Access Hollywood	Nightline	Gravity Games From Cleve- land	Clean House	Access Hollywood
9:30	Kim Possible (EI)	Kind" (1977) Richard Dreyfuss.	Movie *** "Home Alone" (1990, Comedy) Macaulay	Headline News	Air Force TV News Hardball With Chris Matthews	lanu.	BBQ With Bobby Flay	O W No
10:00	Teen Titans "Only Human" Teenage Mutant Ninja Turt.	A lineman's obsession with	Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern.	ESPNews	maruudii Witti Ciiris matthews	l	\$40-a-Day	Headline News ESPNews
11:00	Dragonball GT	UFOs leads him to Wyoming.	Crystal Cathedral	All ABC Bloopers	The O'Reilly Factor	1	Fashion Police	All ABC Bloopers
11:30	Justice League	(:42) Movie *** * "Rain	1			l	It's Good to Be	1
12:00	Teen Kids News (EI)	Man" (1988, Drama) Dustin Hoffman Tom Cruise The Os-	l	Ice Wars 2004: USA vs. The	Dateline NBC	Gravity Games From Cleve-	101 Most Unforgettable SNL	Ice Wars 2004: USA vs. The
12:30	Tutenstein "Tut Jr." (EI)	car-winning study of an autistic	l	World		land.	Moments Intimate Portrait "Florence	World
13:00	Endurance "Final Mission"	man and his brother.			CNN Saturday Morning		Intimate Portrait "Florence Griffith Joyner"	
13:30	Scout's Safari "Brushfire" Skunked TV Chuck drops	(:06) Movie * * * "The Patri-	Frosty the Snowman	Headline News	Economy Watch	1	Antiques Roadshow "Sacra-	Headline News
14:00	some rare bird eggs.	ot" (2000 Drama) Mel Gibson	What's New Scooby-Doo?	Saturday Night Live	Loonolly match	l	mento, California" (Part 2 of 2)	Saturday Night Live
15:00	Most Extreme Mother Nature's	Heath Ledger, Joely Richard-	Movie ★★ "How the Grinch	1	CNN Saturday Morning	Gravity Games From Cleve-	Star Trek: Voyager "The 37's"	,,
15:30	masters of disguise.	son. A Colonial farmer leads a guernila band against the Brits.	Stole Christmas" (2000) Jim Carrey. The evil Grinch plots to			land.		
16:00	Hercules: The Legendary Jour-	ľ	ruin Christmas in Whoville.	Kickin' It Latest in music and trends	Bulls and Bears	SportsCenter	Ripley's Believe It or Not	Kickin' It Latest in music and trends
16:30	neys "The Siege at Naxos" Full House	Coming Attractions Movie ** "Sweet Home Al-	Headline News	The Entertainers	Cavuto on Business	0	Fear Factor	The Entertainers
17:00	Full House Happy Days	abama" (2002) Reese Wither-	Navy/Marine Corps News	THE CHITERTAINERS	Forbes America's Black Forum	SportsCenter	rear ráctor	THE ENTERTAINERS
17:30	SpongeBob SquarePants	spoon. A New York fashion de-	SportsCenter	Inside the NFL	CNN Live Saturday	NFL Countdown	What Not to Wear "Alisha" Inte-	Inside the NFL
18:30	A Scooby-Doo Christmas	signer has a secret in the South.				NBA Basketball Detroit Pis-	rior designer's exterior.	
19:00	Movie "Eloise at Christmas-	Movie ★★% "Serendipity"	NFL Football Green Bay Pack-	College Football Sheraton	War Stories With Oliver North	tons at Indiana Pacers. From	Trading Spaces	College Football Sheraton
19:30	time" (2003, Comedy-Drama) Julie Andrews, Sofia Vassilieva.	(2001, Romance) John Cusack, Kate Reckinsale	ers at Minnesota Vikings. From the Hubert H. Humphrey	Hawaii Bowl Hawaii vs. Al- abama-Birmingham. From Hon-		Conseco Fieldhouse in Indian- apolis, (Live)		Hawaii Bowl Hawaii vs. Al- abama-Birmingham. From Hon-
20:00			Metrodome in Minneapolis.	abama-Birmingnam. Hrom Hon- olulu. (Taped)	Wall Street Journal		Tru Calling "Past Tense"	abama-Birmingnam. From Hon- olulu. (Taped)
20:30	Movie * * * "A Christmas Story" (1983, Comedy) Peter	(:45) Movie *** "Little Women" (1994, Drama)	(Live)	1	Air Force TV News	WD4 11	4 000 18 1 10	,
21:00	Billingsley, Darren McGavin,	Winona Ryder, Gabriel Byrne.	l	l	Next at CNN	NBA Hangtime NBA Basketball Miami Heat at	1-800-Missing A wealthy cou- ple disappears.	l
21:30	Melinda Dillon. A boy wants a	Four New England sisters em-	l	ESPNews	FOY News	Los Angeles Lakers, From Sta-	Friends	ESPNews
22:30	Red Ryder BB gun for Christ- mas	brace life during the Civil War.	NFL Today	NFL Today (Live)	1	nles Center in Los Angeles	Seinfeld "The Bookstore"	NFL Today (Live)
23:00	The Simpsons	Movie ***: "Jerry	NFL Football Oakland Raiders	NFL Football Oakland Raiders	FOX News	(Live)	The Real World	NFL Football Oakland Raiders
23:30	The Simpsons	Maguire" (1996) Tom Cruise.	at Kansas City Chiefs. (Live)	at Kansas City Chiefs. (Live)	1	l	Punk'd	at Kansas City Chiefs. (Live)



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		Updated sports listi	AFR ings are available on the first	TS Televisio	n Schedule orts section or AFN's Web si	te at http://myafn.dodmedia.	osd.mil/	
				SATURDAY, DECEMBER				
	(APN-FAMILY)	(AFN-MOVIE)	(AFK-EUROPE)	(AFRI-KOREK)	(AFN-MEWS)	(AFN-SPORTS)	(SPECTRUM)	(AFRI-PACIFIC)
9:00	Static Shock "She-Bang"	(:12) Movie ())("Close Encoun-	To Be Announced	Access Hollywood	Nightline	Gravity Games From Cleve-	Clean House	Access Hollywood
9:30	Kim Possible (EI)	ters of the Third Kind" (1977)	Movie () "Home Alone" (1990,		Air Force TV News	land.		
10:00	Teen Titans "Only Human"	Richard Dreyfuss. A lineman's obsession with UFOs leads him	Comedy) Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci Daniel Stern	Headline News	Hardball With Chris Matthews	1	BBQ With Bobby Flay	Headline News
10:30	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turt.	to Wyoming.		ESPNews			\$40-a-Day	ESPNews
11:00	Dragonball GT		Crystal Cathedral	All ABC Bloopers	The O'Reilly Factor		Fashion Police	All ABC Bloopers
11:30	Justice League	(:42) Movie ()("Rain Man" (1988, Drama) Dustin Hoffman					It's Good to Be	
12:00	Teen Kids News (EI) Tutenstein "Tut Jr." (EI)	Tom Cruise. The Oscar-winning		Ice Wars 2004: USA vs. The World	Dateline NBC	Gravity Games From Cleve- land.	101 Most Unforgettable SNL Moments	ice Wars 2004: USA vs. The World
12:30	Endurance "Final Mission"	study of an autistic man and his		World	CNN Saturday Morning	iaiu.	Intimate Portrait "Florence	"""
13:00 13:30	Scout's Safari "Brushfire"	brother.			CNN Saturday morning		Griffith Joyner*	
14:00	Skunked TV Chuck drops	(:06) Movie () "The Patriot"	Frosty the Snowman	Headline News	Economy Watch	1	Antiques Roadshow "Sacra-	Headline News
14:30	some rare bird eggs.	(2000, Drama) Mel Gibson,	What's New Scooby-Doo?	Saturday Night Live	Leonomy mater		mento, California" (Part 2 of 2)	Saturday Night Live
15:00	Most Extreme Mother Nature's	Heath Ledger, Joely Richard- son, A Colonial farmer leads a	Movie ("How the Grinch		CNN Saturday Morning	Gravity Games From Cleve-	Star Trek: Voyager "The 37's"	1
15:30	masters of disguise.	on. A Colonial farmer leads a querrilla band against the Brits.	Stole Christmas" (2000) Jim			land.		
16:00	Hercules: The Legendary Jour-		Carrey. The evil Grinch plots to ruin Christmas in Whoville.	Kickin' It Latest in music and	Bulls and Bears	SportsCenter	Ripley's Believe It or Not	Kickin' It Latest in music and
16:30	neys "The Siege at Naxos"	Coming Attractions		trends.	Cavuto on Business	1		trends.
17:00	Full House	Movie (("Sweet Home Alaba-	Headline News	The Entertainers	Forbes	SportsCenter	Fear Factor	The Entertainers
17:30	Happy Days	ma" (2002) Reese Witherspoon.	Navy/Marine Corps News		America's Black Forum			
18:00	SpongeBob SquarePants	A New York fashion designer has a secret in the South.	SportsCenter	Inside the NFL	CNN Live Saturday	NFL Countdown	What Not to Wear "Alisha" Inte	Inside the NFL
18:30	A Scooby-Doo Christmas					NBA Basketball Detroit Pis-	rior designer's exterior.	
19:00	Movie "Eloise at Christmas- time" (2003, Comedy-Drama)	Movie (* "Serendipity" (2001, Romance) John Cusack, Kate	NFL Football Green Bay Pack- ers at Minnesota Vikings, From	College Football Sheraton Hawaii Bowl Hawaii vs. Al-	War Stories With Oliver North	tons at Indiana Pacers. From Conseco Fieldhouse in Indian-	Trading Spaces	College Football Sheraton Hawaii Bowl Hawaii vs. Al-
19:30	time" (2003, Comedy-Drama) Julie Andrews, Sofia Vassilieva.	Homance) John Cusack, Kate Reckinsale	the Hubert H. Humohrey	Hawaii Bowl Hawaii vs. Al- abama-Birmingham, From Hon-	W. II &	apolis. (Live)	T 0 F 10 17	Hawaii Bowl Hawaii vs. Al- abama-Birmingham, From Hi
20:00	Movie III "A Christmas Story"		Metrodome in Minneapolis.	olulu. (Taped)	Wall Street Journal	1	Tru Calling "Past Tense"	olulu. (Taped)
20:30	Movie (); "A Christmas Story" (1983, Comedy) Peter Billings-	(:45) Movie ()* "Little Women" (1994, Drama) Winona Ryder,	(Live)	l ' '	Air Force TV News	NDA Usastima	1 000 Mississ Assessi	1
21:00	lev. Darren McGavin, Melinda	Gabriel Byrne, Four New Eng-			Next at CNN	NBA Hangtime NBA Basketball Miami Heat at	1-800-Missing A wealthy cou- ple disappears.	I
21:30	Dillon. A boy wants a Red Ry-	land sisters embrace life during		ESPNews	FOY Name	NBA Basketball Miami Heat at Los Angeles Lakers. From Sta-	pie disappears.	ESPNews
22:00	der BB gun for Christmas.	the Civil War.	NFLToday	NFL Today (Live)	FUX News	ples Center in Los Angeles.	Seinfeld "The Bookstore"	NFL Today (Live)
22:30	The Simpsons	Movie ();* "Jerry Maguire"	NFL Football Oakland Baiders	NFL Football Cakland Baiders	FOX News	(Live)	The Real World	NFL Football Oakland Baide
23:00	The Simpsons	(1996) Tom Cruise	at Kansas City Chiefs. (Live)	at Kansas City Chiefs. (Live)	I OX INCHIS		Punk'd	at Kansas City Chiefs, (Live)
23:30	Title Simpsons	(· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2		1	Puliku	
	Futurama "Xmas Story"	(11:00) Movie ();* "Jerry	(11:00) NFL Football Oakland	(11:00) NFL Football Oakland	6, 2004 Thoarline News	ESPNews	IMad TV	(11:00) NFL Football Oaklan
00:00	Futurama Amas Story	Maguire" (1996) Tom Cruise,	Raiders at Kansas City Chiefs.	Raiders at Kansas City Chiefs.	McLaughlin Group (N)	ESPNews	Mdu I V	Raiders at Kansas City Chief
1:00	Movie "Floise at Christmas-	Cuba Gooding Jr.	From Arrowhead Stadium in	From Arrowhead Stadium in	The Capital Gang	Inside the NFL	Trading Spaces	From Arrowhead Stadium in
	time" (2003. Comedy-Drama)	(:20) Movie () "Hot Shots!"	Kansas City, Mo. (Live)	Kansas City, Mo. (Live)	The Capital Gally	more the M. C.	Irauling Spaces	Kansas City, Mo. (Live)
1:30	Julie Andrews, Sofia Vassilieva.	(1991, Comedy) Charlie Sheen,	Saturday Night Live	ESPNews	Washington Week in Review	SportsCenter	Tru Calling 'Past Tense'	ESPNews
2:30	Movie IX "A Christmas Story"	Valeria Golino.	Cuturus riigin Eire	ESPNews	Headline News	NFL Football Deriver Broncos	Ind daming rask rende	ESPNews
3:00	(1983, Comedy) Peter Billings-	Movie (* "Serendipity" (2001,		Headline News	Larry King Live	at Tennessee Titans. From the	1-800-Missing A wealthy cou-	Headline News
3:30	ley, Darren McGavin, Melinda	Romance) John Cusack, Kate	Kickin' It Latest in music and	Air Force TV News	,,	Coliseum in Nashville, Tenn.	ple disappears.	Air Force TV News
4:00	Dillon. A boy wants a Red Ry- der BB oun for Christmas	Beckinsale.	trends.	Madeline	At Large With Geraldo Rivera	(Live)	Friends	Madeline
4:30	uei bb gair ioi oillisilias.	(:45) Movie ()* "Little Women"	The American Athlete	Happily Ever After			Seinfeld "The Bookstore"	Happily Ever After
5:00	Sesame Street (EI)	(1994, Drama) Winona Ryder.	Headline News	The Three Stooges	Dateline International		Breathingspace Yoga	Movie (("Pixel Perfect" (200-
5:30	1	Gabriel Byrne. Four New Eng- land sisters embrace life during	Hour of Power	(:20) The Three Stooges	1	SportsCenter	Caribbean Workout	1Comedy) Ricky Ullman, Leah
6:00	Barney & Friends (EI)	the Civil War.	Celebration of Victory	Gilligan's Island	Big Story Weekend Edition		Area	Pipes. A hologram sings for a struggling band.
6:30	Blue's Clues		Coral Ridge Hour	The Simpsons		NFL Matchup		
7:00	Sylvester & Tweety	Movie (* "Liar Liar" (1997, Comedy) Jim Carrey, Maura	Word in the World	MotorWeek	CNN Saturday Night	NFL's Greatest Moments	Swamp Critters	MotorWeek
7:30	Scooby Doo	Tierney, Jennifer Tilly.	Cafe Video Christian music.	Ebert-Movies		SportsCenter	Harvest	Ebert-Movies
8:00	The Magic School Bus (EI)		Madeline	WWE Smackdown!	The Beltway Boys		Music and the Spoken Word	WWE Smackdown!
8:30	The Jetsons House of Mouse	(:40) Movie (* "Double Team" (1997, Adventure) Jean-Claude	Happily Ever After		Fox News Watch	ESPNews NBA Baskethall Miami Heat at	Real Videos Latin Lifestyles	Andromeda Dvlan must defe
9:00	Animaniacs	Van Damme, Dennis Rodman.	Movie ("Pixel Perfect" (2004) Ricky Ullman. A hologram sings	Andromeda Dylan must defeat a false prophet.	Headline News America's Black Forum	Los Angeles Lakers. From Sta-	Urban Style	a false prophet.
9:30	Ed. Edd n Eddy	Mickey Rourke.	for a struggling band.	Headline News	The Chris Matthews Show	ples Center in Los Angeles.	Fantasy Camp	Headline News
10:00	Fillmore (EI)	(-26) Mouis # "Hotamed	SpongeBob SquarePants	ESPNews	Navy/Marine Corps News		Roker on the Road	ESPNews
11:00	Out There "Homesick Blues"	(:26) Movie (); "Untamed Heart" (1993, Drama) Christian	Destinations	Smallville "Velocity"	Big Story Weekend Edition	1	Radical Sabbatical	Smallville "Velocity"
11:30	Planet's Funniest Animals	Slater, Marisa Tomei.	Ebert-Movies			NBA Fastbreak	All-American Festivals	
12:00	NBA Inside Stuff	(:12) Movie ()* "Roman Holi-	Headline News	Movie ()]* "Shakespeare in	20/20	SportsCenter	The Suze Orman Show	The Notebook Movie Specia
12:30	Happy Days "ROTC"	rday" (1953) Grannry Park Au-	Air Force TV News	Love" (1998 Romance)	1	I		Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams star in the drama.
13:00	Movie ("Full-Court Miracle"	drey Hepburn. A princess vaca- tioning in Rome falls in love	NBA Basketball Miami Heat at	Joseph Fiennes, Gwyneth Pal- trow, Geoffrey Rush.	Fox and Friends	NFL Football Deriver Broncos	Celebrity Poker Showdown	McAdams star in the drama.
13:30	(2003, Docudrama) Alex D.	with a reporter.	Los Angeles Lakers. From Sta-	trow, Georriey Hush.		at Tennessee Titans. From the		
14:00	Linz, Richard T. Jones.	with a reporter.	ples Center in Los Angeles. (Live)	(:15) Headline News	Fox and Friends	Coliseum in Nashville, Tenn.		(:15) Headline News
14:30	Movie ()); "Snow White and the	(:24) Movie (("Contact" (1997,	(Live)	Scrubs "My Student"	1	I	l	Scrubs "My Student"
15:00	Seven Dwarfs" (1937) Voices of Adriana Caselotti	Science Fiction) Jodie Foster, Matthew McConaughev, A de-		Meet the Press	CBS News Sunday Morning	1	Battle Stations	Meet the Press
15:30		Matthew McConaughey. A de- voted scientist hears a mes-	ESPNews]			
16:00	Aaahh! Real Monsters	sage from outer space.	WWE Smackdown!	America's Black Forum		Sports Reporters	JAG "Retreat, Hell"	America's Black Forum
16:30	Rocket Power	1 -		Access Hollywood	Face the Nation	SportsCenter		Access Hollywood
17:00	Story of Kwanzaa	True Hollywood Story	Andromeda Dylan must defeat a false prophet.		Headline News	NFL Countdown	The Best Of	
17:30	K-11 B-11 - B-11 - B-1	1		ESPNews	Navy/Marine Corps News	1	Good Eats	ESPNews
18:00	Kratt Bros. Be the Creature Snow monkeys	l	NFL Today (Live)	Fox NFL Sunday (Live)	Late Edition Primetime	I	My Wife and Kids	Fox NFL Sunday (Live)
18:30		M	NET FOR BUILDING	NEL EL MAN DE L'ALLE	1	NE E N. II D	King of the Hill	NE E. A. II D
19:00	America's Funniest Home Videos	Movie ("National Security" (2003, Comedy) Martin	NFL Football Regional Cover- age Baltimore at Pittsburgh,	NFL Football Regional Cover- age Atlanta at New Orleans,	1	NFL Football Regional Cover- age Atlanta at New Orleans,	Hope & Faith	NFL Football Regional Cove age Atlanta at New Orleans
19:30		Lawrence, Steve Zahn.	age Baltimore at Hitsburgh, Houston at Jacksonville or San	age Atlanta at New Orleans, Chicago at Detroit or New York	FOV N	age Atlanta at New Orleans, Chicago at Detroit or New York	All of Us 'Pilot'	age Atlanta at New Orlean Chicago at Detroit or New Yo
20:00	Gilmore Girls 'Girls in Bikinis, Boys Doin' the Twist'		Diego at Indianapolis. (Live)	Giants at Cincinnati. (Live)	FOX News	Giants at Cincinnati. (Live)	Last Comic Standing	Giants at Cincinnati. (Live)
20:30		(:44) Movie (); "This Is My Fa- ther" (1998, Drama) Aidan			FOX News	1	NCIS	1 ' '
21:00	American Dreams "Old Enough to Fight"	Ouinn James Caan Atenant	1		FUX NEWS	I	NCIS	1
21:30		farmer courts a stern Irish wid-	DEL E. M. U.S. C	NET E . M . U.S	W	NE E	F2	NE E
22:00	The Cosby Show	ow's fiery daughter.	NFL Football Regional Cover- age Buffalo Bills at San Fran-	NFL Football Regional Cover- age Arizona at Seattle, Car-	Meet the Press	NFL Football Regional Cover- age Arizona at Seattle, Car-	Friends Seinfeld "The Frogger"	NFL Football Regional Cove age Arizona at Seattle, Car
	Home Improvement	1	age Buttaio Bills at San Hran- cisco 49ers or New England			age Anzona at Seattle, Car- olina at Tampa Bay or Washing-	Seinteid "The Frogger"	age Anzona at Seattle, Cal olina at Tampa Bay or Washii
22:30	Yaushad bu on Angel "							
22:30 23:00 23:30	Touched by an Angel "Break- ing Bread"	Movie (* "Jury Duty" (1995) Pauly Shore, Tia Carrere.	Patriots at New York Jets. (Live)	ton at Dallas. (Live)	FNS with Chris Wallace	ton at Dallas. (Live)	Mad TV	ton at Dallas. (Live)



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FACES

'Fat' Alley teams with Jenny Craig

"Fat Actress" star Kirstie Alley has signed a deal to appear in ads for the Jenny Craig weight-management program

Alley, who has said she wants to lose the weight that prompted her new Showtime series, will star in Jenny Craig Inc.'s 2005 advertising campaign. The TV commercials will begin airing Jan. 10, the Carlsbad, Calif.-based company announced Monday. Terms of the deal weren't

disclosed. "I had a great time getting fat and now I'm going to have an even great er time losing weight," Alley, 53, said

in a statement "I had four offers from other com-

panies, but I wanted to go with the ... one that I knew would work — and, let's face it, Jenny Craig's food is hands-down the yummiest."

Alley's goal is to lose more than 50 pounds. The commercials will follow Alley's progress. The Emmy-winning actress, who starred in television's "Cheers" and "Veroni-ca's Closet," will also keep a weekly blog on the company's Web site

Her Showtime series premieres in March

Berlin Film Festival set for February

The annual Berlin Film Festival will open in February with the world premiere of French director Regis Wargni-er's "Man to Man," a historical adventure epic that stars Joseph Fiennes and Kristin Scott Thomas "Man to Man" is a French-British co-production that

tells the story of a group of anthropologists on a trip to South Africa in the 1870s to look for the connection between man and apes. Wargnier, whose "Indochine" won the best foreign film

Oscar in 1993, wrote the screenplay along with Ghanaian-born author William Boyd, festival organizers said in a statement Tuesday. The movie also stars Iain Glen Hugh Bonneville and Flora Montgomery.

Organizers gave no details of other movies that will run alongside "Man to Man" in the competition for the festi-val's top honor, the Golden Bear. The film will kick off the - the 55th - on Feb. 10, and the event runs through Feb. 20.

Singer: Drugs fun but fattening

Pop singer Robbie Williams said he would still be taking drugs if they didn't make him fat.

"I'd still be doing it if I didn't blow up to the size of an aircraft hangar, you know, because it was a great time," the bad-boy British pop star told

"Some of the best times in my life happened under the influence of drugs ... and I'm not saving 'go out and do drugs, kids,' but I enjoyed them." Williams said in the interview to air on Christmas Day

Williams first made a name for himself on the British pop scene as a member of Take That, one of the most successful boy bands of the

He reportedly fell into drugs after splitting from the group to launch a solo career. His addiction became so bad that fellow pop star Elton John intervened to send him to a rehabilitation

Asked whether he was confident about staying away from drugs and alcohol, Williams, now 30, replied: "No, I'm not confident at all

Ashlee Simpson ready to headline

Ashlee Simpson, whose appearance on NBC's "Saturday Night Live" went awry in a does-she-or-doesn't-she lip-synch moment, will go on the road next year in her first headlining

The tour, scheduled to start Feb. 18 in Los Angeles, will include shows in Seattle, Denver, Chicago, New York, Atlanta and Dallas, Geffen Records announced last week

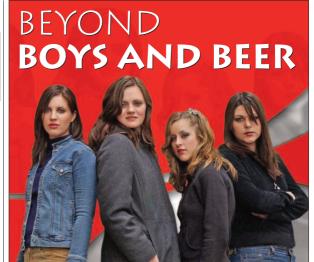
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Simpson, who released her debut album, "Autobiography," earlier this year, will host the West Coast portion of ABC's "New Year's Rockin" Eve 2005" Eve 2005" on Dec. 31. The 20-year-old singer also will perform

Stories and photos from The Associated Pres



at the Orange Bowl halftime show in Miami on Jan. 4



The Donnas want to be known as a rock band. not just a group of girls with guitars

BY SUSAN CARPENTER Los Angeles Times

HOLLYWOOD - To hear the Donnas, you'd think they spend all their free time pinching boys' bottoms or shoving them out of the way. They seem like a gang as much as a band — a tightknit clique snapping gum, smoking Marlboros and emasculating every man they meet

See them outside of their records, and their reputation as Pabst-swilling, sex-crazed party animals quickly disintegrates. Trail them for an evening and you won't see them putting out cigarettes in men's drinks or writing their num-bers on napkins in lipstick.

Members of the Bay Area quartet are just regular girls best friends who like to sip iced tea, eat candy and watch "The O.C." Most of them even have long-term boyfriends, even if those boys are taking a back seat to the band these days while the Donnas promote their sixth and latest record, "Gold Medal."

On the eve of the record's release, Donnas A, C, R and F are at Hollywood's Bel Age Hotel having a quick dinner. In 15 minutes they'll be heading to "Jimmy Kimmel

Live" for an outdoor performance, followed by a midnight meet-and-greet at Tower Records and the official kickoff of what most likely will be a yearlong tour.

Donna R (Allison Robertson) is concentrating on her Cobb salad while Donna A (Brett Anderson) samples a shrimp dumpling that Donna F (Maya Ford) has warned is no good. Donna C (Torry Castellano) jokes about seeing her "good friend" actor Jason Schwartzman, who is a guest on "Kimmel." The entire group laughs, knowing chely met him cally caste she's met him only once.

Like the image they project on their records, the Donnas like to have a good time. But the devil-may-care vibe in their songs is an act — one that's at odds with their real-life ambitions. Two years ago, they made the leap to Atlantic Records after five years with Lookout, the Berke-ley-based indie label that signed them as teens. More mature as musicians and as women, they're now 25 and looking to ratchet up their career. It isn't so easy.

'We're taken less seriously now," says Anderson, a singer whose Sandra Dee good looks are at odds with her sneer-ing vocals. "Every time we get reviewed in Rolling Stone, I feel like they're reviewing our first album. They might like it, but what they say about it is: hair metal. I'm like, 'Are vou listening to the same album we just but out?' "

Listeners familiar with the blunt-talking, come-hith-er/go-away guitar rock on their 1999 breakthrough "Get Skintight" or even their major label 2002 debut "Spend the Night" will hear some differences on "Gold Medal." The songs are slightly slower, to compensate for the tendinitis Castellano was diagnosed with last summer. Slicker than their previous albums, thanks to Avril Lav-

igne producer Butch Walker, the record is also less venom-ous. Anderson's vocals don't sound threatening so much as ous Anderson's vocats don't sound inreatening so much as mimpressed. Lyrically, there isn't nearly as much shut-up-and-get-naked sass, but they can still throw a mean punch. On "Out of My Hands," they dish: "I may not be a man, but you're not one either. It takes one to know

The Donnas' unique brand of snotty rock defies easy classification, but because they're a girl band — a rare breed these days — they are compared with the few other women who've climbed on to the charts

Everyone from the Yeah Yeah Yeahs to Britney Spears to Ashlee Simpson to Avril Lavigne. Anyone who's fe-male," says Castellano, a drummer who now wears a wrist brace. "Guy bands out there like the Strokes or the Vines, people would never compare them to the Backstreet Boys. And yet we are in that position."

Autu yet we are in that position."

A decade ago, when the Donnas formed a band at their Palo Alto high school, it seemed like radio couldn't get enough female artists on the air. On the commercial end of the dial, Hole and L7 reigned supreme; out left, it was PJ Harvey, Liz Phair, Bikini Kill and Babes in Toyland. Women rocked, and radio loved them.

It's a different climate these days. The Donnas have been college radio faves for years, but they get almost no air time on commercial stations.

"It's funny because I feel like the same thing we were going up against when we were first starting out, we're still going up against," Castellano says. "When we first started out, it was a lot more blatant because the guys at our school were like: 'Girls can't play. Go home and play with your dolls.' Now it's a little more subtle. No one actual ly comes up to us and says, 'Girls can't play.' They say, 'We just don't really play girls on rock radio.

Hours later, the four of them are onstage, dolled up in tight jeans, revealing tops and hairdos fresh from the curling iron, walking the fine line between staying true to themselves and working to win the hearts and minds of a new audience. Performing a cut from their new record, Anderson sings the truth: "Just have to wait and see."



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Flu shot eligibility

RI PROVIDENCE — The state Department of Health lowered the age of eligibility for flu shots to 65 from 75, as it anticipates shipments of about 30,000 more doses. The department has given shots to most of those 75 and older. The federal government recommended giving shots to people who are at least

50, but health officials said the state doesn't have enough vaccine.

Freeman to be honored

MS GREENWOOD — Actor Morgan Freeman will be inducted into the Greenwood-Leflore County Chamber of Commerce's Hall of Fame at the annual February meeting. Freeman is a Memphis native but spent some of his early years in Greenwood. Gov. Haley Barbour is scheduled to deliver the meeting's keynote ad-

Flat toll in case of strike

OH CLEVELAND — The Ohio Turnpike Commission authorized flat toll rates if workers strike. The three-year contract for 700 toll workers and 200 maintenance employees was extended to Jan. 17. The turnpike director said the key negotiation issue is the commission's request that workers pay 10 percent of health care costs. The toll for Interstate 80 now depends on the distance driven.

New policy for police

WA SEATTLE — City police of-ficers now need permission from their commanders to take off-duty jobs. Chief Gil Kerlikowske issued the policy to respond to conflict of interest prob lems exposed by officers working at nightclubs with drug and prosti tution problems. About 400 of the city's 1,200 officers work off duty.

Costume stolen, returned

VT BURLINGTON — "Buddy" the blood drop is back but his kidnapping still has not been solved.

American Red Cross employees in Burlington were frantic when they realized someone had stolen their mascot, "Buddy," a 5-foot-tall blood drop costume that is worn to promote local blood drives.

Buddy was left propped up on a stand outside a bloodmobile in the parking lot of a downtown Burlington grocery store. When a Red Cross worker went back to check on it, the costume was gone

"I know the girl responsible for him was a little on the freaked said Red Cross scheduler Jill McCarter. "I mean, how do you tell your boss you just lost \$3,000?" The local Red Cross nurchased

the high-tech mascot, which has built-in air conditioning, about a year ago to attract more donors. Buddy did come back, anonymously returned to the chapter.

Inmate shot in leg

VA STAFFORD — An inmate was shot in the leg by an officer during an escape attempt outside the Rappahannock Regional Jail, Stafford County Sheriff Charles Jett said.

The deputy suffered cuts and



bruises on his head and face, but his injuries were not life-threatening. Jett said. The inmate and the deputy, whose names were not released, were taken to Mary Wash

ROUNDUP

ington Hospital. Jett said the inmate was being transferred back to jail in a patrol car after a court hearing outside Stafford when he broke through a protective barrier and attacked the officer, who was driving.

During the struggle, the vehicle went up and down an embankment, striking a rock culvert and causing the air bags to deploy. The deputy shot the inmate in the upper leg, and jail officers helped take the prisoner into custody, Jett said

Charitable baby shower

NF OMAHA — The children at St. Bernadette School held a baby shower for Shane Edward Kielion Jr. He was born Nov. 15, the same day his U.S. Marine father was killed in Iraq. Mother April Kielion says she wasn't going to celebrate Christmas this year, but her son is because of the efforts of so many people. School counselor Linda Reese says students collected disposable diapers, baby clothing, bedding, gift cards and more than \$700.

Attacked minister dies

WHITELAND — A 72-year-old minister died Tuesday, two days after being at-



Swinging Santa

Taking a break from delivering toys to needy children. Santa. aka Officer W.G. Smith with the Greenville Police Department, finds time for a little recreation at Glendale Apartments in Greenville, N.C.

tacked and choked in front of the altar by a man who called him the devil," police said. The Rev. Bill McElroy of Missionary Baptist Church had been hospitalized since the attack, which took place as church members were arriving for Sunday services.

David J. Cooper, 40, was ailed on suspicion of attempted murder and other offenses Police said the charges would be upgraded to murder.

"I choked him until I knew he was not breathing," Cooper told police according to court papers. couldn't kill a human being. I was killing the devil."

The two men had known each other for some 20 years. The minister had presided at Cooper's 1985 wedding, church members said.

Fine for gorilla escape

DALLAS — A \$10,000 fine from federal regulators against the city over the March escape of a gorilla from the Dallas Zoo will be paid, the mayor says.

Mayor Laura Miller said that she disagreed with the fine levied by the U.S. Department of Agricul-ture. But Miller said, after a closed City Council executive session. that the city will pay it to avoid a protracted dispute with the USDA which regulates the nation's zoos.

Zoo officials have said that 13-year-old Jabari, a 340-pound gorilla, leaped across a moat and wall before going on a 40-minute rampage. Four people were injured before police shot and killed the goril-

Rabid fox stabbed

NH HENNIKER — Two Massa-chusetts men, including one who stabbed a fox that attacked a Christmas gathering, are receiving injections for rabies.

Roy Ely, 50, of Haverhill, Mass.,

stabbed the animal to death with a butcher knife after the fox leapt out of the woods and into a group

leaving a party.

John Allen, 51, of Holden, Mass., as scratched on the leg and, like is receiving injections to guard against rabies. Ely was not sure if the three other people who came into contact with the fox decided to get shots.

The fox is the third animal in town in two months to test positive for rabies, a viral disease that affects the central nervous system and can be fatal to humans if left

Security guard arrested

NV RENO — An unemployed security guard suspected of terrorizing community leaders with death threats, hate-laced graffiti and random shootings has been arrested in California, police said. Gary C. Rosales, 43, of Reno,

was arrested in Whittier, Calif., where he was being held on seven felony counts of shooting a firearm into homes in southwest Reno. No one was injured.

Additional charges are expected as the investigation continues, authorities said. No motive has been established and bail was set at \$250,000

The crime spree began in 1999 with death threats targeting the county district attorney, the former Reno police chief and other officers and their families, authorities said.



Light through the fog Alow-hanging fog on the surface of Lake Champlain shrouds the lighthouse on the northern end of the Burlington, Vt., breakwater.



Running solo Tuesday morning in Durham, N.C

Exercise for this solo runner consists of running up the steps of Wallace Wade Stadium on the campus of Duke University on a cold



T'Kiyah Ferguson, 1, left, reacts as police Officer Terance Scott, dressed Scared by Santa as Santa Claus, enters the Community Child Care Center in Delray Beach, Fla.. for a pre-Christmas visit to deliver toys to the children who were eating lunch.



Jason Lombardi, 7, and sister Gina, 5, spend the first Tubular! day of winter tubbing in Page Park in Bristol, Conn.



Football fun Lee Woods, right, makes the catch as Reese Mardis defends as they play football in Oxford, Miss.



Engineer in training Andrew Kekel, 3, plays with the switches on the Lionel train display in Chesterfield Township. Mich.

Medic posts diary online

TN KNOXVILLE — A medic with the 278th Regimental Combat Team is posting an online diary from Iraq. Second Lt. Lance Frizzell of Murfreesboro says he hopes his blog, posted at http://iraq.billhobbs.com/, will ease the minds of unit members' families and friends back home. About 3,000 members of the Tennessee Army National Guard are in the unit.

Enclave may get face lift

MI EAST LANSING — The stu-dent enclave off the Michigan State University campus known as Cedar Village could be in for a face lift. City and school officials and area property owners are close to completing a long-term master plan that would bring housing designed to appeal to a variety of people. Five student riots have occurred in the area over the past two decades.

Car crashes into store

WA PUYALLUP—A fast-traveling car smashed backward into a busy variety store, winding up about 150 feet inside and injuring seven people, one seriously.

The 67-year-old driver put the 1980s-vintage Lincoln Town Car into reverse and rammed into the suburban Seattle store, witnesses said. The driver and his wife were

Deputies were looking into the driver's statement that the vehicle had a mechanical problem, said sheriff's spokesman Ed Troyer.

One person was taken to a local hospital in serious condition, KING-TV News reported. Six other people were also taken to area hospitals.

Crews worked to clean up debris and make repairs to the store, part of a variety and supermarket chain.

Boy's present stolen

VA CULPEPER — A Culpeper County first-grader's new four-wheeler was stolen while he participated in "Shop With a Cop. a seasonal program for underprivileged children, authorities said.

Jacques Simmons, 7, was shopping at Wal-Mart as part of the program sponsored by the Culpeper County Sheriff's Office when the all-terrain vehicle disappeared from his grandmother's home.

"He tried to be a little trooper and not cry, but ... he cried himself to sleep,' said Aliese Veney, his grandmother

Veney said Jacques received the \$1,900 four-wheeler from his father for his birthday Dec. 1. She said Jacques is a hemophiliac, so there are not too many sports and things he can do. He could ride the four-wheeler because it did not go too fast

The Sheriff's Office has no suspects, a spokesman said.

Bronze bull for sale

NY NEW YORK — The 7,000-pound bronze bull that symbolizes the vitality of capitalism is for sale for a minimum of \$5 million, but the buyer will have to keep it just where it is - in a city park near the New York Stock

Exchange.

"I put the bull up for sale because I need the money to create more masterpieces for New York," said 63-year-old Arturo Di Modica, who created the sculpture 15 years ago and almost literally unloaded it on Wall Street.

Di Modica insisted any deal require the buyer to donate the landmark sculpture to the city

Di Modica was inspired to create the 16-foot-long bull as a symbol of strength and hope after the 1987 stock market collapse. It took him two years to complete and cost him more than \$350,000.

Innocent man freed

TX EL PASO — A man who served nearly 17 years for rape was freed from prison Tuesday after DNA tests determined that he was not responsible for the crime.

Brandon Moon, 43, joined his parents, Frank and Shirley Moon, late Tuesday afternoon for a long drive to their home in Kansas City, Mo., following his release from the El Paso County iail.

Asked what he was feeling in his first moments as a free man. Moon told The Associated Press, "Numb. Have you ever had Novacaine? It's a lot like that, just from head to

Moon, a former University of Texas at El Paso student, had been serving a 75-year sentence after his 1988 conviction on three counts of sexual assault. Throughout his years behind

bars, he maintained his innocence and said he never lost faith when others wouldn't listen to him.

"They're listening now," he said. Moon said he doesn't know what the future holds for him.

"At least in part I'll continue making belt buckles, which has kind of kept me going over the years," he said, referring to his silversmith work while in prison. "What I'll be doing other than that, I don't know

Confederate flag dress

KY LEXINGTON — Jacque-line Duty's prom dress created a stir even before she showed up for the May 1 event.

When Duty came to the Russell High School prom in a self-designed red, white and blue gown with the Confederate battle flag as part of the design, she was told to leave.

School leaders, who had heard about Duty's plans to wear the Confederate-inspired sequined gown. wouldn't allow her to enter the prom or even leave her vehicle, her lawyers say.

Now Duty is suing the school district in U.S. District Court in Lexington, saying the school district and administrators violated her First Amendment right to free speech and her right to celebrate her heritage. She also is suing for defamation, false imprisonment and assault.

She plans as well to sue for actual and punitive damages in excess of \$50,000

Her lawyer said Duty lost many scholarships because she was portrayed as a racist after the incident. Duty's mother added that her daughter graduated near the top of her class in May.

From wire reports

YOUR MONEY

Post offices crowded but sales slow

BY DANIEL DUNAISE New York Daily News

NEW YORK - A breathless Desiree Samuel of Brooklyn rushed to Manhattan's main post office

Monday to mail out a set of holiday presents.

"I am very anxious," Samuel said, as she wrapped the DVD player, body wash and perfume. "I hope it gets those is for your sets." gets there in time."

Samuel was one of the millions who made Monday the busiest day of the year at the post office. Indeed, in Manhattan alone, the post office expected to ship 2.8 million letters, a million above a typical Monday This season, the post office recommends sending

cards, letters and packages out of state by Tuesday to make sure people receive the goodies for Christmas. By Monday afternoon, the line at the city's main post office had 46 people in it, many of them waiting

to mail stacks of letters, packages and bags. Analysts say that so far upscale retailers like Neiman-Marcus have done well, discounters like Wal-Mart have done poorly and midlevel stores like Macy's and J.C. Penney are somewhere in between. All are hoping for a strong finish this week.

The holiday season for "most retailers, except the upscale ones and consumer electronics, was, overall, a bit disappointing," said Kurt Barnard, presi-dent of Barnard's Retail Consulting Group. Total sales Saturday were down 7 percent to \$6.7

billion, compared with the same day last year, ac-

cording to ShopperTrak. That's a discouraging sign when the Saturday before Christmas is historically the second-busiest shopping day of the year — after Black Friday — the

day after Thanksgiving.



Ian Morozoff waits in line at the Laurel Hills Post Office to send presents off to his family and friends Monday in San Antonio.

Stores are doing everything they can to boost spending including deeper discounts and longer

Retail analysts said the increase use of gift cards to more than 11 percent of total holiday sales, and the Internet are making it hard to predict the final outcome of the holiday season.

Retail analysts said the success of the holiday season is often linked to the country's overall financial health, primarily because consumer spending accounts for two-thirds of the economy.

Rejoice about rare, above-book-value insurance payment

My beautiful 1993 Chevy Caprice Classic four-door sedan with only 28,000 miles on it and no dents or scratches - is now a pile of junk. While parked in front of my home, the engine began to smolder, then it burst into flames. Within 10 minutes,

the firefighters arrived. They could not open the hood, but boy did they wield their axes! They almost had fiendish looks in their eyes as they swung their

Click and Clack axes and demolished the

entire front half of my car. They finally pried open the hood and reached the fire. They said it must have been an electrical short. My tears didn't help put out the fire. Although I paid \$18,000 for the car, my insurance company paid me just over \$9,000. It said some-thing about "book value." The Chevy garage blamed the fire on a short circuit, but had no other comment. Is there any warranty covering such an event, and do I have any recourse? - Harold

TOM: Your warranty, in this case, is called "fire insurance," Harold, Unfortunately, that's probably all the recourse you have.

RAY: And remember, you paid \$18,000 for the car BRAND NEW. So getting \$9,000 11 years later is like winning the lottery, Harold I'd cash the check before the insurance company comes to its senses and asks for it back.

TOM: If you really want to pursue this, if you recently had some electrical work done to the car you might be able to make a strong circumstantial case that those mechanics were responsible. But without a direct link like that, it's not easy.

RAY: Once a car burns to the extent that yours did, unless you can get Lt. Columbo in there with the forensics squad, there's really no way to tell what started burning first. It could have been a fraying wire that was damaged during an unrelated repair. It could have been a wire that got pinched dur-

ing a minor fender-bend-

TOM: could been your after-market, automat-

ic butt massager gone haywire! RAY: Whatever the cause, there was a large, unintended discharge of electricity from the battery, and that produced the heat that started the fire.

TOM: In terms of your settlement, you can look up the "Black Book" value vourself. There's a link to it from our Web site. cartalk.com. I think you'll see you're off the charts.

RAY: And, to confirm your observation, the firefighters probably did have a fiendish look in their eyes. After all, it's not often that they get to chop up a car with their bare hands. I've never tried it, but I plan to stop at the hardware store on my way home and buy an axe, and then head right to my brother's driveway!

Got a question about cars? Write to Click and Clack in care of this news per, or e-mail them by visiting the Car Talk section of cars.com on the World Wide Web. Distributed by King Features Syndicate Inc

WEDNESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES											
week Low	Name	Net Chg	Chg 9	4 Chg	52-wk % Chg						
9,708.40	Dow Jones Industrials Dow Jones Transportation	10,815.89	+56.46	+.52	+3.46	+4.96					
254.11	Dow Jones Utilities	336.27	+.70	+.21	+25.99	+27.01					
1.118.28	Amex Index	1,407.79	-4.13	29	+19.96	+21.25					
324.66	S&P 500	1,209.57	+4.12	+.34	+8.78	+10.56					
515.90	Russell 2000	648.46	+2.26	+.35	+16,44	+14.98 +17.40 +12.09					
			743.09			¥12.03					
	9,708.40 2,743.46 254.11 6,171.85 1,118.28 1,750.82 324.66 548.29	Low Name	Week Low Name Last	Week Last Net Low Name Last Chg 9,706,40 Down Jones Industrials 18,815,50 +56,46 2,714,66 Down Jones Transportation 1,956,50 +56,46 3,715,50 1,745,50 +7,47 +7,195,50 6,171,55 NYSE Composite 1,195,70 +2,111 1,192,62 Nextley Composite 1,197,79 +1,21 1,192,62	week Low Het Chg Chg <td>Week Low Name Last the Chy Chy<</td>	Week Low Name Last the Chy Chy<					

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Pfizer Solectrn Lucent Citigrp NortelN If GenElec QwestCm Time/Warn MicronT Motorola	698726 271876 262641 203424 194281 169798 168174 151087 145465 139988	25.95 5.25 3.78 48.31 3.38 36.84 4.50 19.19 11.88 17.44	+.98 78 01 +1.12 +.03 11 19 +.34 +.13	SPDR SemiHTr DJIA Diam iShJapan SP Engy OilSvHT iShRs2000 WheatR g RetailHT SP Util	279131 118046 65874 53330 39891 38798 35348 30909 27424 23341	120.68 32.86 108.01 10.53 36.30 85.30 129.26 3.16 97.80 28.02	+.29 +.11 +.59 +.03 50 -1.37 +.25 04 +.90 +.06	SiriusS Nasd100Tr Microsoft Intel Cisco CienaCp JDS Uniph Symantec Oracle ApIdMatl	613206 550206 529438 512664 384468	7.89 39.73 26.97 23.45 19.32 3.20 3.05 25.68 13.70 16.99	+.03 +.05 10 04 +.41 +.01 +.71 09 +.13		

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EXCHANGE RATES

Dollar buys	€0.7240
British pound	\$1.97
Japanese ven (Dec. 24)	101.00
South Korean won (Dec. 23)	1.030.00
Commercial rates	3
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.37698
British pound	\$1.9144
Canada (Dollar)	
Denmark (Krone)	5.21
Egypt (Pound)	6.2224
Euro\$1	.3381/0.7473
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7812
Hungary (Forint)	182.36
Iceland (Krona)	62.585
Israel (Shekel)	4.3365
Japan (Yen)	104.08
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.29460
Norway (Krone) Philippines (Peso)	5.81
Philippines (Peso)	56.08
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	
Singapore (Dollar)	1.6396
South Korea (Won)	
Switzerland (Franc)	1.08
Thailand (Baht)	39.03
Turkey (Lira)	.1,376,000.00
(Military exchange rates	are those
available to customers at m	ilitary bank-
ing facilities in the country	of issuance
for Japan, South Korea, Ge	ermany, the

onlocal currency exchange rates d, which is represented in ound, and the euro, which is

PRECIOUS METALS

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate5.25
Discount rate 3.25
Federal funds market rate2.25
3-month bill2.20
30-year bond4.83
Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of

ents and Sensibility Money tip of the day

Less traveling stress

NEW YORK - Getting from here to there and back again can be one of the worst parts of the holidays.

About 62.7 million Americans will be traveling over the holiday weekends this year, reports AAA. That's up 3 percent from last year, or an additional 8.6 million neonle.

With so many people traveling at once, the key to saving time and money is to go with the flow, says Susan Foster, author of "Smart Packing for Today's Traveler." Foster advises that you prepare for the trip by shifting your attitude. It's going to be crowded. There will be long

lines. "This is the way holiday travel is. Just embrace it." she savs

■ Arrive early.

■ Prepare for security screen-

■ If you're traveling with gifts, find out which items are permitted in carry-on bags, and which must be put into checked luggage. "People have a 'disconnect' between bringing on something as a gift, and bringing on their personal belongings," Foster says. Your airline won't care if that hunting knife is yours or a gift for Uncle Joe - it still isn't allowed on the plane.

■ Make sure that none of your gifts are wrapped. Pack gift bags for quick wrapping.

Horoscope

Tis the night before Christmas and all through the stars, not a planet is stirring, except of course Mars, who happens to be packing his bags and heading for the adventureland of Sagittarius. It's a real "ho-ho-ho" of a transit for aggressive Mars, emphasizing the need for excitement, novelty and human connection

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (December 24). You've been ready for something different for a while now and one big change at the start of the year sets the tone for your adventure! When you stop waiting for others and take matters into your own hands, you marry, improve your love life or transform an ailing relationship. In April, your improved confidence brings money

ARIES (March 21-April 19).

flowing in

The bustle and clamor of the season have provided distraction in recent days, but now, you're clear and centered with your heart in the right place. Your best creations are made expressly with lots of love for one enecial nerson

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). If done your way, the holiday is bright. Be specific and repetitive with all information you'd like your guests to know. If not, you'll be receiving company at all odd hours, and the events unfold in a haphazard man-

GEMINI (May 21-June 21).

You have a way of adhering to formality in the most casual and elegant manner! A little of the old mixed in with the new is your recipe for a holiday that makes everyone feel included.

CANCER (June 22-July 22).

This is a red-letter day, especially if there's a gathering at your place Family and friends behave just how you thought they would, but you have a few unexpected surprises planned to jump-start the celebratory eneray

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The

anticipation of a holiday is for you even better than the holiday itself and that's why you love night-before revelry. Evening rituals come together nicely. Your bighearted extravagance is the talk of the party.

Holiday Mathis

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your whole being swells with philanthropic energy and good will. Though home and hearth are where kindness begins, they are not where it ends. You're fulfilled when you get out and share with the world

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your

tuned in to the natural offerings of the season tangerines and walnuts, the smell of burning logs and bite of cold air. Your job is to help others appreciate things as completely as you do.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your mission is one of outreach. Through the phone and the Internet you spread your spirited mood to the corners of the globe - or at least the country. Don't hold back! Be mushy! Loved ones long to hear it

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You turn even the simplest of tasks - like wrapping a present into a holiday extravaganza. Why

not involve as many elements and people as you possibly can? The more the merrier, right? CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan.

19). Your kindness is legendary. You should know that loved ones have expectations of you based on what you've done in the past. Honor your own traditions. It feels like coming home.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You like to keep things loose because, to you, overplanning makes proceedings forced and stiff. Be the one to instigate an impromptu game You'll fill your house with laughter and warm feelings

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

Your individuality is marvelous. You're celebrating in your own quirky way. A procession of interesting twists and turns in the plot today makes it impossible to do things other people's way anyhow.

Peanuts



WHY? BECAUSE I'VE TOTALLY REJECTED THE CONCEPT OF THE FAT GUY IN THE RED SUIT! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MA-LIFE I FEEL FREE! FOR ONCE I ...























Rover

and ヌ







Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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Across

- 1 Brewery product
- 8 Nightfall
- 12 Zodiac critter
- 13 Comedian Chris
- 14 "- Brockovich"
- witchhunter
- 18 Hollywood
- 20 Slander
- 22 Garden starter
- 24 Hideaway
- 25 Kenobi portrayer
- 30 "... against a —
- 31 Sapporo sash 32 Nixon opponent
- 34 Protuberance
- 35 Lap dog,
- 36 Disconcerts
- 37 Cheaper group?
- 40 Antitoxins
- 42 "Full dinner pail"
- president
- Paris?
- 47 Destruction
- 49 Cattle herder's
- 50 Put in the mail

51 Adage

Down 1 Branch

- 2 Fond du ---,
- Wisconsin
 - 3 Host's job
 - 4 Glitch 5 Decomposes
 - 6 Essen expletive
 - 7 Firmament
 - 8 Strip 9 Saharan
- 10 Pugilists' venue
- 11 Dandling site
- 16 Emulsifying agent 19 Soft ball
- 20 Run-down
- part of town
- 21 Playwright
- Connelly
- 22 Frighten
- 23 "Ghostbusters"
- role

- 42 "_ Miniver" 43 Prompt 44 JFK info 45 Evergreen
 - variety

25 Earth's inheritors?

26 Ashcroft's

intended

SUCCESSOR

28 BBQ entree

Nykvist

34 "Family Feud"

36 Mock attack

Scissorhands" star

33 Began

host

37 "Edward

38 Finished

40 Epidermis

39 Nil

27 Reed instrument

30 Cinematographer

Answer to Previous Puzzle												
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12-24 CRYPTOOUIP GFC'L

JXIXKJR JKZXFC, RELSFTZS

ZTKBB X ' G ΖF LSKJK

R ERBL JKBFJL Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF TINY PARASITES GET INTO MAILED ITEMS, SHOULD YOU PAY MORE FOR SHIPPING FLEAS?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals T

Right choice to disown mother

Dear Abby: From the time that my father left - I was 8 until I was thrown out of the house at 16, my mother was seriously emotionally abusive and neglectful. She frequently called me filthy names made bizarre accusations that had no basis in truth, told Dear Abby me I was a "mistake. threatened me, publicly humiliated and belittled

I am now in my mid-20s and have had no contact with my mother for three years. My older brother is in denial about the abuse and insists that I forgive her and rebuild our relationship. He claims that she's sorry

and she misses me I recently traveled back to my hometown and visited my mother. She treated me as though I

were a stranger. Afterward, I felt that I could move on, knowing I had done the right thing in deciding to cut her out of my life. Now the rest of the me. I would like to maintain a personal relationship with them, but they think I'm a bad person for no longer having a relationship with my mother. Do you have any advice?

- Left in the Cold in Duluth Dear Left in the

Cold: Only this: If the price of having a relationship with your family is tolerating their emotional blackmail and more abuse from your mother, the price is too high

Dear Abby: Not long ago, we moved into a beautiful new

housing development. Neighbors on the street behind us keep their puppy penned up outside day and night in all kinds of weather. Occasionally we see one of their neighbors walk the dog, but other than that, it seems the dog's existence

omeowners' association or the Humane Society, as these neighbors seem like decent people However, it is upsetting our small children, as well as my husband and me, to hear the poor animal cry. We can't imagine spending the next 10 years like this. What do you recom-

mend we do? - Canine Lovers in California Dear Canine Lovers: Although you would rather not, for the puppy's sake, pick up the phone and contact the homeowners' association and the Humane Society. You'll be doing the neglected creature - and your-

Letters for this column — with your Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6! Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can to Abby on the Internet at to Abby on the internet at http://www.uexpress.com/deara Universal Press Syndicate

DRAIC

AURR

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion one letter to each square Nine...ten...it's over



ENDED UP IN THE OUTDOOR BOXING TASTLE Now arrange the circled letters to

form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

do when it was hard to-MAKE ENDS MEET

MATCH.

WHERE THE L

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

OSER

(Answers tomorrow) Jumbles: ENEMY STOKE TANDEM ESTATE Answer: Despite a tight budget, he bought a new tuxe-

selves - a favor The owners of that poor animal have no idea how to properly care for a dog. The Humane Society will instruct them on the proper care of their furry family member.

Yesterday's

is limited to a cement pad covered in you-know-what. Disabilities not always visible

Annie's Mailbox

Dear Annie: I've never written before, but after reading your re sponse to "President of an Assisted Health Care Service in Kansas" in the Wisconsin State Journal I felt the need. He said handicapped parking spaces should be used only by those in wheelchairs Thank you for your response to this compassionless person

My 80-year-old mother is probably one of those people he complained about Mom has a collapsed lung, has had back surgery and is prone to blood clots forming in her one good lung. This makes breathing very difficult at times. Yet if you look at her, she seems fine. It's only when you watch closely that you realize she stops every hundred feet or so to catch her breath. There are days she can barely walk across the living room without stopping to rest.

Sure, the system gets abused, but let's have a little compassion.

You never know what problems might be hidden from view

- Madison, Wis Dear Madison: That writer said we could print his name, but we thought that might not be such a good idea. Read on for more rea-

sons why: From Arizona: My wonderful daugh ter-in-law has MS. She

usually has no trouble walking. but at times she gets a tingling in her legs that tells her she only has a few minutes to find a place to rest. I'd like to kick that Kansas Health Care manager right where he won't need a wheelchair, but will have trouble walk-

Southwest Florida: I'm handicapped but do not require a wheelchair because I can walk short distances. Once inside the store I latch onto a cart, even if I only need a loaf of bread, because the cart serves nicely as a walker. Those handicapped spaces make a huge difference to

Mississippi: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. As a nurse, I know of so many people who,

like you said, need every ounce of energy just to breathe. My mother, while not in a wheelchair, is considered handicapped because of injuries sustained in a vehicle accident. She needs that handicapped spot. Ferndale, Calif.: My best

friend has rheumatoid arthritis. and every step he takes is painful. Another friend had major surgery and breathes through a tracheotomy. How could anyone object to shortening the distance between car and building for these people? I find it appalling that a healthy person would begrudge the slightest favor to those unfortunate enough to need handicapped parking.

nie's Mailbox is written by Kati chell and Marcy Sugar, longtin editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndi-cate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

Family Circus



"Dolly! I think I heard some clatter out on the lawn!"









Horoscope

Mars transits into Sagittarius bringing a feeling of global unity well, maybe unity is a stretch. Per-haps we can only hope for awareness or even acknowledgment of our foreign sisters and brothers, but generous intentions are certainly in place. The realization is that we're not so different after all. It's a perfect transit for festive interaction.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (December 25). There's

simply no room for doubt this year in your personal life or your professional life Your sensational can-do attitude attracts only the most positive people to your team. A key financial move in the next six weeks sets of a series of events. An idea that's been researched, market tested and refined over a dozen times hits pay dirt in June

ARIES (March 21-April 19).

You have a rare case of nerves when you wake up this morning and may feel you've returned to childhood emotions connected with this day. Rest assured you'll rise to the occasion and deliver whatever is asked of you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Your earth-sign super-stability is a comfort to everyone around you. You'll be the glue that keeps your group together. Music is the key to creating holiday memories. Tonight features some kind of hootenanny.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Any departure from the normal holiday rituals will bring luck and opportunity in the year ahead. So feel free to make this special day all your own. When you feel fabulously creative and unrestricted, there's

CANCER (June 22-July 22).

You use your psychic sense to deliver gifts that go straight to the heart. Sweethearts need relaxed one-on-one time. If you have to sneak away from family in order to get this, go for it, and don't feel

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You've wisely figured out that holiday proceedings go better when you don't try to control them. This goes double for activities involving willful children or adults who act like them. Kisses under the mistletoe are featured.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).



Though you have some trepidation

there's nothing to worry about. Your sincere efforts to honor the spe cial relationships in your life bring joy. An exceptional match of style and practicality puts a shine

on all you do. LIBRA (Sept.

23-Oct. 23). You love a happy homecoming and will do everything in your nower to make sure that

relatives are on their best behavior. Along those lines, you're an expert at switching the conversation topic when necessary.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You know how to create multileveled

fun. Someone is intent on winning your heart with an expensive gift. Only you can manage to keep commitments loose on a structured day. Hot invitations are last minute.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec.

21). When you take a detached look, there's something almost humorous about the motley assemblage of merry well-wishers around you. The more eclectic your support group is, the more thoroughly you feel supported.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan.

19). Is it the lights, the music or the general sentimentality of the sea son? For whatever reason, you see the world through idealistic eyes and why not for one day of the year? Love is all around you

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).

You've got that overriding feeling that we're all in this together. Material nifts are the least valuable ones you'll exchange this year. Your sharing extends to stories, insights and loving acknowledgments.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

Go slow, and savor togetherness Rituals you attach to this day have more meaning than gifts exchanged. Lasting bonds are formed over shared activities. Let everyone contribute to the fun, and take plenty of pictures

Creators Syndicate

Peanuts

more to share



I'M AFRAID.....WHAT IF I WAS WRONG ABOUT THIS WHOLE STUPID SANTA CLAUS THING? WHAT IF THERE AREN'T ANY PRESENTS FOR ME? I'M AFRAID TO GET UP AND LOOK



















Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
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Across

- 1 Java Sea locale 5 Catcher's aid
- 9 Satchel
- 12 Hebrew month
- 13 "The Music Man"
- site 14 Flightless bird
- 15 Roman historian
- 16 Put an end to 17 Healers' org.
- 18 Dnieper city
- 19 Bill
- 20 Ball in a gym? 21 Do surveillance
- 23 "- little
- teapot, ..."
- 25 Suitable 28 Scorching
- 32 Showed again
- 33 String quartet
- 34 Puts forth
- 36 On the slate
- weather
- 38 Nevertheless

- Reinking
- 44 Writer Ferber
- 48 Edge
- muscles
- 50 Picture of health?

- 53 Top-notch

- 55 Singer Tori 56 Aerobics venues
- 1 "Loser" singer
- 3 Troubadour's
- 5 Greenhouse
 - gadget
- Small bit 7 Trivial
- 8 Spigot
- 9 Tolerate
- 10 Bullets
- 11 Agana's island 20 1984 Sam
- Shepard
- screenplay 22 Streisand title
- role
- 24 Flick

- 37 Under the
- 39 Asset
- 42 Richards or
- 49 Show off the
- 51 Intensify
- 52 Traditional tales

- 54 "Undeniably"

- Down
- 2 lai follower

 - prop
- honoree 4 Cole Porter song 35 Zigzag through
- 31 Mid-June gates

25 Opposite of

"post-"

27 Raw rock

29 "Poppycock!"

30 - -de-France

26 Harrison or Reed

- 36 Bobcats 39 Ask for a really
- big favor?
- 40 Vitamin C source
- 41 Diamond
- experts?
- 43 Caligula's nephew
- 45 Get rid of
- 46 "Peter Pan" pooch
- 47 Favorable votes
- 49 Peninsula St.

Answer to Previous Puzzle



12-25 CRYPTOOUIP

GOHPHUV FHV YIIS D J VJJF DTIUBN. н, о XЈ

SPQUUHUV D J OQYI 0

QXD-FHDBN IGGJTD Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I DON'T LOVE THE RIVIERA REGION, ALTHOUGH I GUESS I'D GO THERE AS A LAST RESORT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals N

'Soulmate' not type to commit

Dear Abby: I'm a widow in my mid-60s - attractive, petite and active. I hate being alone. I have a friend I'll call Barney who is in his 70s. Barney's a wonderful dancer and a polished gentleman. We've known each other for 10 years

About a year ago, our friendship evolved to the next level. We became intimate. I fell in love with Barney and thought I had finally found my soul mate.

Last month, I asked this wonderful man if he was looking for a committed relationship. Barney's answer shocked me. He said he didn't want to fall in love because he'd been hurt too many times. Then he told me he is also in a relationship with someone else! I was devastated. I cried all the way home. Barney still calls every day and invites me out.

When I hear his voice, I melt. My best friend, "Bea," is havthat Barney is coming and bringing his girlfriend! Abby, the only reason Bea invited Barney is that she and I both thought he'd bring me. I'd like to call him and ask him not to come and embarrass me. Or should I just stay home? I really need advice.

- Heartsick in San Francisco

Dear Heartsick: Your "soul mate" either suffers from a sensitivity deficiency, or he's trying to send you a message: "Don't count on him, because he has a girlfriend."

I sympathize with our disappointment. but don't let it stop you from attending the

party. While you're there, get the lady's phone number and invite her for coffee. She might be interested to know how much the both of you have in common.

Dear Abby: I am 14. My friend, "Heidi," is well- endowed.

Yesterday, she told me her stepdad pulls on her shirt so he can look down it. He says he doesn't mean anything by it, but it makes Heidi really uncomfortable

She has told her mom, but her mom just says he's not doing it on purpose, and ignores it. What should I do? Should I tell some. one, or let her and her family settle it?

- Shocked in Fayetteville, N.C. DEAR SHOCKED: By ignoring it. Heidi's mother is allowing it to

continue. The first thing to do is tell your mother what's going on. Then urge your friend to speak to a trusted teacher or counselor at school about what her stepfather is doing. They are mandated to report it. Go with Heidi for moral support if necessary. Her safety depends on it, because the girl's stepfather's behavior is extremely inappropriate.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at

http://www.uexpress.com/dearabby Universal Press Syndicate

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Affice Unscramble these four Jumbles. one letter to each square.

to form four ordinary words. SOPIE

REMEB INFURA

CRIMET

THEIR-Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

WITH EVERYONE

HOME FOR THE

HOLIDAYS, MOM

DAD ENJOYED

(Answers Monday)

Answer here:

Jumbles: Answer

RURAL NESTLE LATES1 Where the loser ended up in the outdoor boxing match - UNDER THE "STARS"

Family Circus

"You come over and see what I got, then I'll go see what you got.

ing a 60th birthday party next A prayer for the Christmas season

Dear Readers:

Today is Christmas, and we hope those who are celebrating this holiday are fortunate enough to enjoy it with family and friends. Here is a prayer that was sent to us over the Internet

We do not know who wrote it, but we think it expresses an appropriate sentiment for the season: A Christmas Prayer

Let us pray

That strength and courage abundant be given to all who work for a world of reason and understand-

That the good that lies in each of our hearts may day by day be magnified. That we will come to see more clearly not that which divides us,

but that which unites us.

That each hour may bring us closer to a final victory, not of na-tion over nation, but of ourselves over our own evils and weakness-

That the true spirit of this Christ-mas Season, its joy, its beauty, its hope, and above all, its abiding

Annie's Mailbox

Dear Abby

faith, may be among us. That the blessings of eace be ours, the peace to build and grow, to live in harmony and sympathy with others, and to plan for the future with

confidence Dear Annie: You

get so many stories about children who are estranged from their parents, or siblings who are cruel to one

another. Here's a nice change for you: When my husband and I had our 50th wedding anniversary, our four children asked us how we wanted to celebrate. I suggested they and their families come to our house and rebuild a shade garden structure that

termites had damaged. So they came - all 18 of them Tents were pitched in the backyard, and every room in the house had someone sleeping in it. Not only was the structure rebuilt, but they also installed a new irrigation system. They washed windows, inside and out,

scrubbed walls, dusted book-

shelves, washed and rehung curtains and vacuumed under the heavy furniture. Grandchildren pruned shrubbery and hauled trash. Even the garage got a good cleaning out. Our kids brought all the food, drinks and paper goods, and everyone took turns preparing meals and wash-

I never heard one cross word or complaint, even when the line to the bathrooms was four deep. At the end of their visit, everyone wrote about the experience in a

memory book which I cherish. If your readers want to do something really special for their parents, they might consider a

work day" similar to ours. Feeling Blessed in Whittier, Calif.

Dear Whittier: You and your husband must be wonderful people to have family members who love you so dearly. Congratulations

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comeast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, e/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate















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AFN-Sports, 12:30 p.m.—College football:
Pioneer Pure Vision Bowl, Uct.J. vs. Wyo-ming (dld).
AFN-Sports, 5 p.m.—Pro football: NFL Films Game of the Week II (dld).
Sport Land Boy Sp.m.—Pro foot-ball: Green Bay at Minnesota.

Saturday

AFN-Atlantic and Radio, 1 a.m.—College football: Hawaii Bowl, Hawaii vs. Ala-bama-Birmingham. AFN-Sports, 3 a.m.—Action sports: 2004 Gravity Games (did). Gravity Games (did).

AFN-Sports, 6 a.m.-Action sports: 2004
AFN-Sports, 9 a.m.-Action sports: 2004
AFN-Sports, 9 a.m.-Action sports: 2004
Gravity Games (did).
AFN-Sports, noon-Action sports: 2004
Gravity Games (did).
AFN-Sports, a p.m.-Action sports: 2004
AFN-Sports, 3 p.m.-Action sports: 2004 AFN-Sports, 3 p.m.—ACHUM SPORS. EAG-Gravity Games (did).
AFN-Sports and Radio, 6:30 p.m.—Pro bas-ketball: Betroit at Indiana.
AFN-Atlantic, 7 p.m.—Pro football: Green Bay at Minnesota (did).
AFN-Pacific, 7 p.m.—College football: Ha-waji Bowi, Hawali vs. Alabama-Birmingham

(dld). AFN-Sports and Radio, 9:30 p.m.—Pro bas-ketball: Miami at L.A. Lakers. AFN-Atlantic and Pacific, 11 p.m.—Pro foot-ball: Oakland at Kansas City.

AFN-Radio, midnight—Fro football: Oak-land at Kansas City.

AFN-Sports and Radio-230 a.m.—Pro football: NIXAFN-Sports and Radio-230 a.m.—Pro football: NIXAFN-Sports, 7 a.m.—Pro football: NIXAFN-Sports, 9 a.m.—Pro basketball: Mamil at LA. Lakers (dip).

Mamil at LA. Lakers (dip).—Pro football: Denver at 1 renessesse (dip).—Profootball: D AFN-Sports, 1 p.m.—Pro 10010am, Denical at Tennessee (did).
AFN-Atlantic, 7 p.m.—Pro football: San Diego at Indianapolis.
AFN-Sports, 7 p.m.—Pro football: Baltimore at Pitsburgh.
AFN-Pacific, 7 p.m.—Pro football: Atlanta at New Orleans. AFN-Radio, 7 p.m.—Pro football: Baltimore AFN-Atlantic, 10 p.m.—Pro football: New England at N.Y. Jets. AFN-Pacific, 10 p.m.—Pro football: Carolina at Tampa Bay.

AFN-Sports, 10 p.m.—Pro football: Arizona at Seattle. AFN-Radio, 10 p.m.—Pro football: Buffalo

AFN-Atlantic, 1 am.—Pro football: Houston at Jacksonville (did).
AFN-Sports and Radio, 230 a.m.—Pro football: Cleveland at Miami.
AFN-Sports, 9:30 a.m.—Pro basketball: Dallas at Denwer (did).

All Times Central European Time; did indi-cates delayed broadcast. All listings are sub-ject to change. Visit www.mvafn.net for

Pro football

NFL									
AMERICAN CONFERENCE									
y-New England N.Y. Jets Buffalo Miami	12 10 8	4 6 11	0	.857 .714 .571 .214	393 297	246			
y-Indianapolis Jacksonville Houston Tennessee	11 8 6	3 6 8 10	0000		248	253			
y-Pittsburgh Baltimore Cincinnati Cleveland	13 8 6	6	0000	.571 .429	280 313	225 340			
y-San Diego Denver Kansas City Oakland	11 8 6 5	689	ō	.571 .429 .357	311	262 274 381 398			
NATION	East								
yz-Philadelphia Dallas N.Y. Giants Washington	W 13 5 5 5 5 5 5	9	0000	.929 .357 .357 .357	369 256 253	202 367 300			
y-Atlanta Carolina New Orleans Tampa Bay	11 6 6 5 North	3	0000		300 301	298 374			
x-Green Bay Minnesota Chicago Detroit	8 8 5	6699	0000	.571 .571 .357 .357	356	340 281			
Seattle St. Louis Arizona San Francisco x-clinched divisi y-clinched divisi	on	9 12	0 0 0	.500 .429 .357 .143	267 251	356 291			

Green Bay at Minnesota
Saturday's gam
Oakland at Kansas City
Denver at Tennessee
Sunday's gam
Chicago at Detroit yan

unicago at Detroit
San Diego at Indianapolis
Baltimore at Pittsburgh
Houston at Jacksonville
Atlanta at New Orleans
N.Y. Glants at Cincinnati
Buffalo at San Francisco

New England at N.Y. Jets Arizona at Seattle Arizona at Seattle
Washington at Dallas
Carolina at Tampa Bay
Cleveland at Miami
Monday's game
Philadelphia at St. Louis

College basketball

AP Men's Top 25 fared

Wednesday
. Illinois (11-0) beat Missouri 70-64. Next: Longwood. Monday vs. Longwood, Monday. 2. Kansas (8-0) beat Wisconsin-Milwaukee 73-62. Next: vs. No. 9 Georgia Tech, Friday,

Dec. 31. 3. Oklahoma State (9-0) did not play. Next: 3. Oklahoma state (3-17) unu in kenye.

ys. No. 13 Gonzaga, Tuesday,
4. North Carolina (9-1) did not play. Next:
vs. North Carolina-Wilmington, Tuesday,
5. Wake Forest (10-1) beat New Mexico
81-64, Next: vs. North Carolina A&T, Thurs-

5. Wane ruses at 15. Head of the control of the con

son, Sunday, Jan. 2.
7. Syracuse (11-1) beat Rice 88-72. Next: vs. Albany, N.Y., Tuesday,
8. Kentucky (8-1) beat William & Mary 92-47. Next: vs. Campbell, Wednesday,
9. Georgia Tech (8-1) beat Charleston Southern 90-88, Next vs. Lafayette, Tuesday.
Bichmond. Thursday. 10. Pittsburgh (8-0) did not play. Next: vs Richmond, Thursday. 11. Connecticut (6-1) beat Central Connect icut State 87-59. Next: vs. Sacred Heart, Tues

igid State 87-59. Next'us. Sacred Heart, Tuss-12. Washington (-91) beat Sacred Heart 114-51. Next 'se, Houston, Friday. Next 'se, Houston, Friday. Stationary (-91) of the Sacred Heart 114-51. Next 'se, Houston, Friday. Stationary (-91) of the Sacred Heart 145. Treads (-91) of the Contenting 19-52. Next 1.6. North Carolina State (-91) did not play. Next us. All (-91) of the Sacred Heart (-91) of the Frico. Tussially (-91) beat Austin Peay 77-48. Next 'se, Morrebast State Monday. 19. Alabama (191-1) heat Texas AMAC-per Monday (-91) of the Sacred Heart (-91) of the Next 'se, Morrebast State Monday.

/ednesday. 20. George Washington (7-1) did not play. avt- at Florida International Thursday.

20. seeging Wassington 17. / Next at Florida International, Thursday. 2.1. Mississippl State (11-2) beat Jackson-ville State 95-35. Next: vs. Viriginia Tech, Thursday, Dec. 30. 2.2. Cinclinnati (9-0) beat La Salle 84-63. Next: vs. Allami (Oh), Monday. 2.3. Michigan State (7-2) did not play, Next: vs. North Carolina-Asheville, Wentesday. 2.4. Maryland (62) did not play. Next: Maryland (6-2) did not play. Next: vs. American, Thursday.
 Virginia (7-1) did not play. Next: vs. Loyola Marymount, Thursday.

Wednesday's men's scores

Wednesday 5 IIICII 5 3001 63

EAST
Boston College 88, Duquesne 70
Bucknell 76, Niagara 74
California, Pa. 109, East Stroudsburg 103
Clarion 85, Cheyney 83
Connecticut 87, Cent. Connecticut St. 59 Connecticut 87, Cent. Connecticut: George Mason 95, St. Bonaventure Harvárd 78, Long Island U. 60 Hofstra 64, Columbia 40 Hofstra 64, Columbia 40 Hofstra 64, T. 44, West Chester 53 Iona 77, Va. Commonwealth 72 Kutztown 77, Lock Haven 71 Lafayette 73, Moravian 55 Merchuset 70, Slinona 50

Lafayetis 71, Monthered 19, 1800 Merchant 19, 18

Nicholls St. 101, Cincinnati Bible 45 Old Dominion 66, Saint Joseph's 62 S. Dakota St. 82, Tennessee St. 80 SE Louisiana 62, Loyola, La. 35 South Carolina 68, S. Carolina St. 65, OT Vanderbit 68, Appalachian St. 51 W. Kentucky 89, Kentucky St. 73 W. Michigan 74, Virginia Tech 68 MIDWEST

W. Michigan 74, Virginia Tech 68
Butler 74, Ball 15, 18
Charlotte 41, Indiana 73
Charlotte 73
Charlotte 74, Indiana 74
Charlotte 74, Indiana 74
Charlotte 74, Indiana 74
Charlotte 74, Indiana 74
Charlotte 7

Portland 76, UC Riverside 70 Sacramento St. 71, Great Falls 49 San Diego 71, UC Santa Barbara 63 Stanford 71, Dartmouth 54 UNLV 83, Florida Atlantic 66 Utah 92, Cal Poly-SLO 76 Utah 92, Cal Poly-SLO 76
Wake Forest 81, New Mexico 64
Washington 114, Sacred Heart 53
Wyoming 49, Washington St. 47
TOURNAMENT

Wyoming 42, 1 TOURNAMENT Billy Minardi Classic Championship Louisville 77, Austin Pegy 49 Third Place Ind.-Pur.-Indpls. 72, New Orleans 60 Office Depot Golden Bear Classic First Round

California 69, Hampton 46 Pepperdine 91, Arkansas St. 82

Outrigger Hotels Rain Semifinals Hawaii 55, Oral Roberts 54 Southern Cal 81, UAB 78 thern Cal 81, UAB 78
Consolation Bracket
nson 83, Indiana St. 57
rgetown 57, Long Beach St. 51
San Juan Shootout
Championship

Toledo 68, Auburn 65 Third Place Middle Tennessee 73, Delaware 69, OT adidas D3 Desert Shootout Second Round

Hanover 70, Mount St. Mary, N.Y. 64

EXHIBITION

Wis.-Eau Claire 86, Finlandia 70

Women's AP Top 25 fared

13. Minnesota (8-2) did not play. Next: vs. Drake, Thursday. 1.1. Minnesda (8-2) din not play, Next: vs. 14. Boston Collego (8-1) defeated St. Joseph's 65-41. Next: vs. George Washington, 11. Georgia (9-2) dil not play. Next: vs. Ar-15. Georgia (9-2) dil not play. Next: vs. Ar-16. The college of the colleg 18. lowa (10-0) did not play. Next: at Wis-onsin-Milwaukee, Tuesday. 19. DePaul (8-2) did not play. Next: vs. Val-araiso at Hanover, N.H., Wednesday. 20. UCLA (6-3) did not play. Next: vs. South-rn Cal, Tuesday. ern Cal, Tuesday.

21. Purdue (6-3) did not play. Next: vs. South Dakota State, Tuesday.

22. Houston (9-2) did not play. Next: at New Mexico State, Monday, Jan. 3.

23. Kansas State (6-2) did not play. Next: at 23. norman state (6-2) did not play. Next: at Villanova, Tuesday. 24. Rutgers (6-2) did not play. Next: vs. No. 9 Tennessee, Wednesday. 25. Utah (8-3) did not play. Next: at Gonza-ga, Wednesday.

Wednesday's women's scores

Boston College 65, Saint Joseph's 41 Clarion 73, Cheyney 63 Hartford 57, Rider 46 Kutztown 47, London Hartford 57, Rider 46 Kutztown 47, Lock Haven 46 La Salle 68, Providence 32 St. Francis, NY 58, Lafayette 33 West Chester 70, Indiana, Pa. 65 SOUTH CS Northridge 77, New Orleans 51 Chattanooga 96, Furman 66 Chattanoogā 96, Furman 66
Gardner-Webb 69, N. Carolina A&T 65
Georgian Court 79, Goldey Beacom 67
Louislana-Lafayette 70, Lamar 51
Old Dominion 83, Harvard 55
South Carolina 85, S. Carolina St. 45
South Edida 76, Wanger 38 South Florida 76, Wagner 36 Valdosta St. 67, Fla. Gulf Coast 47 MIDWEST

MIDWEST
E. Illinois 67, Charleston Southern 49
Indiana 63, Va. Commonwealth 41
Louisville 64, Xavier 61 Louisville 64, Xavier 61 Ripon 82, Simpson, Iowa 69 SW Missouri St. 73, SE Missouri 64 W, Michigan 65, Detroit 64 Wis.-Oshkosh 77, Carroli, Wis. 72 Wis.-Platteville 73, Edgewood 39 Youngstown St. 74, Cleveland St. 52 SOUTHWEST

SMU 80, San Diego St. 36 Texas A&M-Corpus Christi 70, North Texas

58
San Diego 80, Air Force 78, OT
UNLV 66, Nevada 60
TOURNAMENT
San Juan Shooto
Championship
Florida St. 83, Charlotte 72
Third Place
Northwestern 69, Towson 66

Fifth Place
Toledo 43, N. Iowa 40
Seventh Place
Fordham 72, Puerto Rico-Mayaguez 31
Sheraton Barcelo Navy Classic
First Round
Delaware St. 57, N.C.-Asheville 51
Navy 69, Morehead St. 46

College football

Bowl glance

Tuesday, Dec. 14 New Orleans Bowl New Orleans Bowl
Payout: \$750,000
em Mississippi 31, North Texas 10
Tuesday, Dec. 21
Champs Sports Bowl
At Orlando, Fla. Payout: \$850,000
Georgia Tech 51, Syracuse 14
Wednesday, Dec. 22
GMAC Bowl
Mobile, Ala.

WILAR/4HIDS

IF YOU DIE.

MASSIVE!

Payout: \$750,000 Bowling Green 52, Memphis 3

Thursday, Dec. 23 Fort Worth (casa) Blowl Cincinnat (6-5) Kas Yeasa Bowl Las Yeasa Bowl Wyoming (5-5) Las Yeasa Bowl Wyoming (5-5) Lot A (5-5) Priday, Dec. 24 At Honolulu UAB (7-4) Va. Payout \$75,000 HPC Computers Bowl Payout \$75,000 Fresh Ostate (5-1) vs. Virginia (6-3) Fresh Ostate (5-1) vs. Virginia (6-3) Experience of the Computer of the Comput

At Detroit
Payout: \$750,000
Toledo (9-3) vs. Connecticut (7-4)

Alamo Bowl At San Antonio Payout: \$1.55 million Ohio State (7-4) vs. Oklahoma State (7-4)

Deals

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL
American League
BOSTON RED SOX — Agreed to terms with
HP Matt Clement on a three-year contract
nd LHP Lenny DeNardo on a one-year con-

ract.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX—Agreed to terms

WHO PHP Orlando Hernandez on a two-year

manager of contract, Named Mick, Leyva manager, of contract, Named Mick, Leyva manager, of contract, Named Mick, Leyva manager, of coach and Roberto Espinozy pitching coach for pitch of the Appalachian League, No coach for Great Falls of the Pioner, League, Rich Critis Crom manager of Winston-Salem of the napolis of the South Aldrest League, Rich applications of the South Aldrest League, Rich and Totson pitching coach for Brimsham minur league infect described to the Winston of the South Aldrest League, Rich with Marks Shainer, general manager, on a two-year copiract extension through 200 with Marks Shainer, general manager, on a two-year copiract extension through 200 with Marks Shainer, general manager, on a two-year copiract extension through 200 minur league conforacts.

ninor league contracts.

NEW YORK YANKEES—Agreed to terms
with RHP Carl Payano on a four-year con-

TAMPA BAY DEVIL RAYS—Agreed to terms
with 1B-DH Josh Phelps on a one-year con-

with 1.50 M Josh Frielps on a non-year con-tract.

**Marchael Lague **Lond Leave **Lond Leave **Lond Leave **Lond Leave **Lond Leave **Lond Leave **Lond Shoet * ng coordinator.
MONTREAL EXPOS—Agreed to terms with C Brian Schneider on a one-year contract. NEW YORK METS—Agreed to terms with RHP Orber Moreno on a minor league con-

ract. ST. LOUIS CARDINALS—Agreed to terms with OF So Taguchi and LHP Mike Myers on

ine-year contracts.

SAN DIEGO PADRES—Agreed to terms with
DF Dave Roberts and OF Mark Sweeney on
ine-year contracts. one-year contracts.

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association
CLEVELAND CAVALIERS—Activated F-G

uke Jackson from the injured list. Placed G Dajuan Wagner on the injured list. HOUSTON ROCKETS—Activated G Charlie Ward and F Bostjan Nachbar from the in-jured list. Placed F Ryan Bowen and G Andre Barrett on the injured list. arred list. Macco in Section 1 in a rest on the injured list.

LOS ANGELES LAKERS—Placed C Vlade

The injured list. Activated F Brian LOS ANGELES LAKENS—PIACEO O VIAGO
Divac on the injured list. Activated F Brian
Grant from the injured list.
FOOTBALL
National Football League
ATLANTA FALCONS—Placed FB Stanley
Pritchett on injured reserve. Signed FB

George Layne.

BUFFALO BILLS—Signed RB Dante Brown
from Claveland's practice squad Placed C Jon Dorenbos on injured reserve.

CHICAGO BEARS—Placed LB Brian Urlach
er on injured reserve. Signed DE Alain Kasha er on injured reserve. Signed DE Alain Kasha-ma from the practice squad. Signed LB Carl Diggs to the practice squad. CMCNNAT BERNALS—Signed FB Doug Ea-STERING LIONS—Placed WR Eddle Drum-mond on injured reserve. Signed CB Mike Echols from Minnesota's practice squad. NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS—Signed RB Rabih Abdullah and WR Kevin Kasper. Walved BD Gomare Lowe and LB Justin Kurpeikis.

SAN FRACISCO 49ERS—Placed DE Andre Carter on injured reserve. Signed LB Max Yates to the practice squad. Signed DE Corey Smith from Tampa Bay's practice

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS—Placed LB Curtis SEATILE SEATHWAS—PIACED IS CUTTON
Randall on Injured reserve.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS—Signed DE Bryant McNeal, Placed S. Jermaine Phillips on injured reserve. Signed DB Kalvin Pearson to the practice squad. Released DE Corey Smith from the practice squad. mith from the practice squad.
SOCCER
Major League Soccer
COLORADO RAPIDS—Named Fernando

Clavijo coach.

TENNIS

ITF—Suspended Stefan Koubek three nonths for failing a drug test at the French

TANK MCNAMARA





MILET

JUICE!

THIEFT



James' strong game spoiled by late mistakes

The Associated Press

The box score showed LeBron James with 23 points, nine re bounds and nine assists. What it didn't show were the litany of mistakes he made in the final 2 minutes - the last of which helped cost the Cleveland Cavaliers a

game. Richard Jefferson canned the highest scoring night of his career by using a pick to free himself from James before hitting an alley-oon layun off an inbounds pass with 0.8 seconds left, giving the New Jersey Nets a 92-90 home victory Wednesday night.

It was a frustrating finish for the Cavs, and especially for The second-vear star's mis-

takes included committing two traveling violations, drawing a technical foul, missing a foul shot and a field-goal attempt, and not sticking with Jefferson on the crucial inbounds play.

"It's disappointing because we fought so hard to get back in this game," James said. "I don't want to take anything away from them because they played well, but this was another one we let slip away

Jefferson had 42 points and shot 12-for-20 from the field and 16-for-17 from the line for the Nets, who also got a career-high 22 points from Rodney Buford Vince Carter, acquired last week from Toronto, was sidelined by a sore Achilles' tendon. He expects to make his Nets debut Monday night against Detroit.

James was livid that referee Marc Davis whistled him for two traveling violations and a techni-

"Those are great moves, I don't care what anybody says. I've been doing those moves since I've playing basketball. I thought they gave you an extra step in the NBA, even though I

didn't take one," James said. James had a dunk and then made one of two free throws to tie it at 90 with 43.6 seconds left. A missed jumper by Buford led to a jump ball with 17.5 seconds left. and the Cavs controlled it.

James missed a 10-foot runner, and New Jersey rebounded and called timeout with 1.5 seconds remaining to set up an inbounds play on which Jefferson lined up near the free throw line. Jason Kidd set a pick on James, and Jeff McInnis failed to pick up Jefferson when James didn't fight through the screen.

Cleveland had a final chance.



but Lucious Harris' three-point attempt was long.

76ers 102, Pacers 90: At Indianapolis, Allen Iverson scored 40 points, ending his streak of 50-point games at two, and Phila-

delphia rallied with a closing 19-2 Iverson was looking to become iust the third player in NBA history to score 50 or more points in

three straight games. SuperSonics 98, Nuggets 83: At Seattle, Rashard Lewis scored 21 points, Ray Allen added 20 points and Vladimir Radmanovic

had 19 to help the SuperSonics improve to 19-5 Andre Miller led the Nuggets

with 20 points. Denver played without forward Carmelo Anthony, who missed his third straight ne after spraining his left Raptors 98, Jazz 86: At Toron-

to, Donyell Marshall scored 12 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter, and Chris Bosh added 18 points for Toronto. Carlos Boozer had 29 points

and 10 rebounds for Utah.

Celtics 114. Knicks 109: At Boston, Mark Blount scored 22 points, Paul Pierce added 21, and Kendrick Perkins had a career-high 13 rebounds for the

Nazr Mohammed had 22 points and 18 rebounds, and Jamal Crawford scored 25 for New York, which blew a 14-point first-quarter lead.

Magic 93, Spurs 87: At Orlando, Fla., Steve Francis scored 29 points to help Orlando snap a seven-game losing streak against

Tony Battie had 11 rebounds, and his defense on Tim Duncan kept the two-time MVP from being a factor down the stretch Duncan led the Spurs with 24 points, but didn't score after a free throw with 5:58 remaining.

Hawks 113, Mavericks 100: At Atlanta, Antoine Walker scored 25 points, and the Hawks snapped a five-game losing streak. Al Harrington added 17 for Atlanta.

Bulls 89, Pistons 82: At Auburn Hills, Mich., Ben Gordon scored 19 points, and fellow reserve Tyson Chandler had 13 points and 11 rebounds as Chicago won its fifth straight game.

row since Michael Jordan led them on a 14-game run during the 1997-98 championship sea-

Bobcats 90, Rockets 87: Emeka Okafor had 21 points and 11 rebounds, and Jason Kapono added 16 to lead the expansion Bobcats to their first road win.

Okafor had his 14th consecutive double-double, tying Shaquille O'Neal for the second-longest streak by a rookie in NBA history.

Lakers 101, Hornets 89: At Los Angeles, Chucky Atkins scored a season-high 30 points, Chris Mihm had 21 rebounds to match the highest total in an NBA game this season.

Kobe Bryant had his second straight off-shooting night, but scored 17 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter for the Lakers

Warriors 109, Grizzlies 99: At Oakland, Calif., Jason Richardson scored 24 points, and Troy Mur-phy had 19 points and 13 rebounds to help the Warriors snap their four-game losing streak. Trail Blazers 104, Bucks 95:

At Milwaukee, Nick Van Exel had season highs with 26 points and six three-pointers, and Zach Randolph added 22 points for Port-

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division L Pct 13 .500 13 .480 14 .440 Boston Philadelphia New Jersey Toronto 16 .360 18 .357 Division 20 7 .741 15 10 .600 14 10 .583 7 15 .318 5 20 .200 vision 5 20 200 Central Division 12 12 500 12 12 500 9 15 375 6 16 273 **Western Conference**

	W	1	Pct	GB					
San Antonio	20	6	.769	-					
Dallas	17	10	.630	31/2					
Houston	12	14	.462	8					
Memphis	12	16	.429	9					
New Orleans	2	23	.080	171/2					
Northwest Division									
Seattle	19	5	.792	-					
Minnesota	15	9	.625	4					
Portland	13	12	.520	61/2					
Denver	13	13	.500	7					
Utah	11	16	.407	91/2					
Pacific Division									
Phoenix	22	3	.880	-					
Sacramento	17	7	.708	41/2					
L.A. Lakers	14	11	.560	8					
L.A. Clippers	12	12	.500	91/2					
Golden State	8	18	.308	141/2					
Wednesday's games									

Wednesday nto 98, Utah 86 Toronto 98 Tittal Say 9 sames Boston 114, New York 109 Philadelphia 102, Indiana 90 Orlando 93, San Antonio 87 Orlando 93, San Antonio 87 Chicago 85, Detroit 82 New Jersey 82, Cleveland 95 Charlotte 90, Houston 87 Seattle 85, Derwer 83 Golden State, 109, Memphis 99 LA. Lakers Thursday's games Minnesota at San Antonio Mismi at Seramento.

Memphis at Phoenix Mami at Sacramento Friday's games No games scheduled Saturday's games Detroit at Indiana Miami at L.A. Lakers Sunday's games

Sunday's Charlotte at New York Chicago at Milwaukee Boston at San Antonio New Orleans at Cleveland Toronto at Phoenix Washington at Minnesota L.A. Clippers at Houston

Golden Stave Monday Charlotte at Washington New York at Orlando New Orleans at I Atlanta at Miami New Jersey at Detroit L.A. Clippers at Memphis Seattle at Utah Philadelphia at Portland Denver at Golden State

Wednesday Raptors 98, Jazz 86

UTAH - Harpfin 6-12-31 4J. Boozer 11-20
TJAH - Harpfin 6-12-31 4J. Boozer 11-20
T-31 2S, Radojević 2-3-0-4, Bell 4-12-0-1, Bel

Toronto 19.1 2.2 20.—56
Three-four Goals—Utah 2-10 (Bell 1-2, Lopez 1-4, Harpring 0-2, Glirede C-2, Toronto Lopez 1-4, Harpring 0-2, Glirede C-2, Toronto C-2, To

Celtics 114. Knicks 109

NEW YORK — T.Thomas 7-12 2-3 19, K.Thomas 7-13 2-9 1, M.Thomas 7-13 2-9 NEW YORK — T.Thomas 7-12 2-3 19, K.Tho mas 7-13 0-0 14, Mohammed 6-12 10-11 22 Marbury 5-17 2-3 12, Crawford 9-17 2-2 25

Boston
Three-Point Goals—New York 8-18 (Craw-ford 5-9, 1.Thomas 3-4, Houston O-1, Marbury
0-4), Boston 5-14 (McCardy 2-4, Pierce 2-4,
0-4), Boston 5-14 (McCardy 2-4, Pierce 2-4,
0-4), Boston 1-14 (McCardy 2-4, Pierce 2-4,
0-4), Boston 1-14 (McCardy 1-4), Boston 1-14 (Mohammed 1-8), Boston 1-5), Total Total 1-14 (Marbury 10), Boston 2-6, Pierce, Payton 5, 1 Total Foulis—New York 26, Pierce, Payton 5, 1 Total Foulis—New York 26, Pierce, Payton 5, 1 Total Foulis—New York 25, Pierce, Payton 5, Total Foulis—New York 26, Pierce, Payton 5, Pierce, Payton 6, Pi Boston 19. Technicals—Boston Defensi Three Second. A—15.655 (18.624).

Hawks 113, Mavericks 100

DALLAS - Howard 6-12 9-11 23, Nowitzki 7-19 748 23, Dampier 1-4 22-4, Terry 9-14 12-5 7-19 748 24, Dampier 1-4 22-4, Terry 9-14 12-6 7-500, 2-3 0-9, Harris 6-11-2, I Readley 0-6 0-0, Amstrong 0-5 2-2, Booth 0-0 0-0, Terris 3-7-6 2-5 10, Inc. 10-17 17, Walker 10-17-4-9 25, Collier-1-2, 1-13, Ivey 2-3 12-5, Smith 5-9-4-8, I Orbinals 0-2-2-2, Delik 6-16 12 14, Anderson 2-5-0-5, Childress 6-9 16, Willis 6-10-0-12, Totals 4-68-51-63

22 24 24 30-100 Dallas 22 42 43 90–100
Atlanta
Three-Point Goals—Dallas 9-24 (Terry 4-7,
Howard 2-2, Nowitzki 2-5, Frileip 1-6, Harris
D-1, Armstrong 0-3), Atlanta 3-14 (Anderson
0-2), Fouled out—Howitzki, Albehounds—Dallas 45 (Dampier 8), Atlanta 56 (Harrington,
Walker 10), Assists—Dallas 18 (Finley, Terry 4), Atlanta 26 (Harrington 7), Total fouls—Dallas 6, Atlanta 25, Atlanta 25, Atlanta (5), 445).

76ers 102. Pacers 90

PHILADELPHIA — Iguodala 3-7 0-0 8, Thomas 2-5 0-0 4, Dalembert 2-3 3-4 7, Green 2-9 0-0 4, Iverson 12-23 14-16 40, M.Jackson 7-11 4-4 18, Korver 2-5 0-0 5, Williamson 4-13 0-0 8, Ollie 2-2 4-4 8, McKle 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 36-78 25-28 102.

25-28 102.

INDIAMA — J.Jones 0-4 0-0 0, Croshere 3-13
4-4 10, Foster 9-12 0-5 18, Miller 10-15 7-8 30,
Tinsley 7-17 2-2 17, Harrison 1-1 1-2 3,
Johnson 1-3 0-0 2, F.Jones 5-12 0-0 10, Haislip
0-10-0 0, Curry 0-0 0-0 0, Gill 0-0 0-0 0, Totals
36-78 14-21 90,
Philadelphia
25 25 21 19-90

Indiana Pinia Indiana In

Magic 93, Spurs 87

Orlando

16 20 18 29—93

Three-Point Goals—San Antonio 4-12
(Bowen 2-3, Udrih 1-1, Ginobili 1-5, Parker
0-1, Barry 0-2, Orlando 3-8 (Turkoglu 2-2,
Mobley 1-2, Francis 0-4). Fouled out—None.
Rebounds—San Antonio Sc (Westerovic II).
15 (Parker 5), Orlando 15 (Francis 6). Total
fouls—San Antonio 20, Orlando 19. Technicals—Orlando Delay Of Game 2, Turkoglu.
A—16,225 (17248).

Bulls 89. Pistons 82

DUIS 07, FISTORS 62.

CHCAGO - Deng 38-44 10, Davis 27-0-4,
Cury 5-9 2-3 12, Hinrich 3-8 2-2 10, Duhon 64.

Cury 5-9 2-3 12, Hinrich 3-8 2-2 10, Duhon 64.

Chandler 6-8 12, 13, Piatkowski 14-0-9 3, Gifffin 0-0-0-0, Totals 33-70 17-21 89.

DETROIT - Prince 3-13 0-0 6, R.Wallace
5-11 2-1, 21, Mixing 5-10 5-10, Billiops 9-16.

5-11 2-1, 21, Mixing 6-10 5-10, Billiops 9-16.

0-0, 4, Hunter 2-5-0-4, Dupree 5-9-6 0, Ham
0-0, 0-0, Totals 31-87 15-19.

Circago - 19 22, 27-18 25-78.

Detroit 9 19 19 24 20 – 82 Detroit Goals—Chicago 6-16 (Gordon 7 Three-John Goals—Chicago 6-16 (Gordon 7 Three-Jein 2-5, Nocioni 16 (Billups 4-7, RWalace 1-5, Hamilton 0-1, Prince 0-2), Fouled out—Hinrich, Hamilton Rébounds—Chicago 49 (Chandler 11), Detroit 52 (8,Wallace 15), Assists—Chicago 16 (Hinrich 5), Detroit 12 (3,11 Lips 7), Total fouls—Chicago 30, Detroit 12 3, Technicals—R Wallace A. – 22,076 (2,2076).

Nets 92. Cavaliers 90

CLEVELAND — Newble 7-12 0-2 14, Gooden 6-10 2-2 14, Ilgauskas 2-9 4-4 8, James 7-18 8-10 23, McInnis 5-17 4-4 17, Harris 1-7 3-3 5, Varejao 1-10-0 2, Snow 1-3 0-0 2, Williams 0-1 1-2 1, Diop 2-6 0-0 4, Totals 32-84 22-27 90.

Cleveland 28 10 29 23-99 Rew Jersey 27 Three-Point Goals—Cleveland 4-12 (McInn-5-7), James 1-1, Newble 0-1, 300w 0-1, Hisr-5-7), James 1-1, Newble 0-1, 300w 0-1, Hisr-5-7, James 1-1, Newble 0-1, 300w 0-1, Hisr-2-4, Kidd 0-2), Fouled out -Collins, Rebound-Cleveland 25, Gooden 11, New Jersey 24, King-(Kristle 03, Assists—Cleveland 25 (James 94, Older 1987), All Cleveland 25, New Jersey 21, Technicalis— James, New Jersey 12, Technicalis— 3 James, New Jersey 12, Technicalis— 4 – 16.327 (1986)

Trail Blazers 104. Bucks 95

PORTLAND — Miles 6-11 1-2 14, Randolph 9-144-422, Ratliff 3-63-59, Anderson 5-11 0-0 14, Van Exel 9-17 2-2 26, Patterson 3-7 3-4 9, Stoudamire 2-8 3-3 8, Przybilla 0-0-0-2 0, Out-law 1-1 0-0 2, Telfair 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 38-75 16-22 104.

16-22 104. MILWAUKEE — Mason 7-15 2-3 16, Smith 6-9 2-2 14, Gadzuric 6-9 0-1 12, Redd 2-10 0-1 4, M.Williams 0-3 0-0, James 9-17 3-3 22, Gill 69 0-0 12, Pachulia 3-5 2-2 8, Fizer 2-7 6-0 4, 40-20 14, Mary 10-10 16, Mary 10-10 Portland 28 24 25 27—104 Milwaukee 22 25 27—104

Milwaukee 12 23 18 32 – 95 Three-Point Goals-Portland 12-22 (Van Exel 6-11), Anderson 4-6, Milles 1-2, Stoudamire 1-3), Milwaukee 2-8 (House 1-1, James 1-4, Redd 0-3), Fouled out-None. Rebounds—Portland 54 (Randolf), 11), Milwaukee 10, Milwaukee 23 (Redd, Smith, James 4), Total fouls-Portland 16, Milwaukee 18. Technicals—Milwaukee Defensive Three Second. A-13/789 (LAR-A-13/789), A-13/789), A-13/789), A-13/789 (LAR-A-13/789), A-13/789), A-13/789)

Bobcats 90, Rockets 87

CHARLOTTE — Okafor 8-20 5-6 21, Wallace 1-3 0-0 2, Brezec 7-12 0-2 14, Knight 4-9 1-1 9, Bogans 3-8 3-6 9, Rush 0-4 0-0 0, Kapono 7-0 0-0 16, Sampson 1-2-0 2, Hart 3-4 6-8 14, Ely 0-4 0-0 0, S.Smith 1-2 0-0 3, Totals 35-80 15-23

Samon J. C. Samon J. C. G. S. J. Collado 3-99 11-25.

MOUSTON L. Jackson E. 13 0-6 15. Neward McGrady 6-17 11-17 25. Lie 1-8 0-9.27. Microbiol 6-17 11-17 25. Lie 1-8 0-9.27. Microbiol 6-0-60-70. To 7-10-67. Microbiol 6-0-60-70. To 7-10-67. Microbiol 6-17 11-17 25. Lie 1-8 0-9.27. Microbiol 6-17 11-17 25. Lie 1-8 0-9.27. Microbiol 6-17 11-17 25. Lie 1-8 0-9.27. Microbiol 7-17 11-17

Sonics 98, Nuggets 83

DENVER — D.Johnson 3-8 2-28, Martin 8-12 2-218, Camby 1-41-23, Buckner 0-00-00, Mill-er 8-11 4-4 20, Nene 2-3 3-9 7, Boykins 1-9 0-0 2, Elson 0-1 2-2 2, White 8-20 0-0 17, Russell 2-5 0-0 6, Tskitishvili 0-0 0-0 0, Totals 33-73 14-21 83. 14-21 83.

SEATTLE — Evans 3-4 0-3 6, Lewis 7-15 5-5
21, James 2-3 0-0 4, Allen 7-20 4-4 20, Ridnour
2-11 0-0 4, Murray 6-13 3-4 15, Radmanovic
7-14 2-2 19, Fortson 1-1 1-2 3, Collison 2-4 2-2
6, Kutluay 0-0 0-0 0.
Totals 37-65 17-22 98.

Denver 15 23 31 14-83

Totals 37-85 17-22 98.

Denver State Control of Control

Warriors 109, Grizzlies 99

MEMPHIS — Gasol 6-10 7-9 19, Posey 7-16 7-7 22, Wright 3-5 0-0 6, Miller 3-7 2-2 8, Will-iams 6-11 0-0 13, Swift 7-12 4-5 18, Watson 1-3 0-0 2, Battler 1-3 1-2 4, Wells 1-3 3-35, Hum-phrey 1-2 0-0 2, Jones 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 36-72

24-28 99. GOLDEN STATE — Murphy 6-15 6-12 19, Pletrus 3-10 3-4 12, Robinson 6-10 0-015, Richardton 6-18 10-12 24, Claxton 7-13 7-7 22, Cheaney 4-4 0-0 8, Foyle 0-0 0-0, Najera 3-5 0-0 7, Flores 1-3 0-0 2, Sesay 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 36-79 26-35 10-0

36-79 25-35 109. Memphis Coded State 22 25 20 25—99 Coded State 21 22 35 39–109 Coded State 21 22 35 39–109 Coded State 21 22 35 39–109 Coded State 21 22 (Petrus 3-5, Robinson 3-5, Britandson 3-4, Britandso

Lakers 101. Hornets 89

Lakers 101, Hornets 89

NEW ORLEANS - Nalion 7-14-6 18, Andersen 1-6-1-23, Brown 7-16-0-14, Wesley 7-2-320, Dickad 44-0-9, Freile 2-60-4, Dawis 6-12-0-0-17, Smith 2-8-0-4, Baxter 0-0-0-0-0, Totals 3-69-9-11, Beer 2-8-6-6-10, Jodon 3-5-3-4-10, Milm 5-10-1-21, Breyant 9-26-10-15-33-4-10, Milm 5-10-1-21, Breyant 9-26-10-15-30, Grant 0-1-2-2, Terown 0-2-0-0, Jones 0-1-2-2, Cook 2-7-0-4, Totals 3-1-2-2, Terown 1-2-2-2, Terown 1-2-2-2, Terown 1-2-2-2, Terown 1-2-2-2, Terown 1-2-2, Terown 1-2-2

tals 31-82 30-37 101.

**Lat Start S

Image: Youth, wealth blamed for troubles

IMAGE EDOM BACK BACK

Many of the youngsters coming into the league lack fundamentals, making their first few years an on-the-job training program. Some never learned the life lessons necessary for the adult world, either, put on pedestals at increasingly young ages.

Couple that with the huge salaries players get these days and there can be problems. Teenagers who had to ask their parents for spending money only a year or two ago are suddenly millionaires carrying \$100 bills for pocket change. Tricked-out \$UVs are a given, and some players sport

more bling than Jennifer Lopez.
"I really do think that the perception from the fans is that players are selfish, that the only thing that matters is the money — because the money has gotten so big—and the players don't really respect or care about the fans," said Chicago Bulls general manager John Paxson, who won three NRA titles as a nlaver.

"I don't think that's necessarily the reality, but as they say, perception is reality."

The personal antics don't help. Kobe Bryant no longer faces criminal charges, but he's still being sued by a woman who claims he raped her. Police had to use a stun gun on Michael Olowokandi last month to get him to leave an Indianapolis bar.

Carmelo Anthony has been in a bar fight, charged briefly with drug possession after a friend's marijuana was found in his back-pack and seen on a homemade DVD with a man who warns that people who tip police about drug deals "get a hole in their head"—and that's just since September.

Latrell Sprewell said "Tve got my family to feed" when he demanded the Minnesota Timber-woives extend the contract that pays him \$14.6 million this year, then got suspended for yelling a sexual vulgarity at a female fan. A week after signing a six-year, \$84 million contract extension with Portland, Zach Randolph had to find his own way to a game in Toronto because his alarm clock didn't go off and he missed the team flight.

briefs

And, of course, there's the brawl. Ron Artest, last year's defensive player of the year, has been suspended for the rest of the season after charging into the stands in Detroit and punching a fan he thought had thrown a drink at him, and eight other players got suspensions ranging from eight to 30 games. Five Indiana the civil lawsuits are already starting.

"Any professional sport has a problem to some degree when an incident like this takes place." San Antonio Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "The salaries that professional athletes make can be a problem if players aren't aware of what that responsibility might be, what comes along with that contract. Some players understand it, some teams understand it, some teams understand it, some teams understand.

"But to make a broad stroke, 'The NBA or this sport or those players have a problem,' I think, is dangerous."

Even if fans are grumbling, they haven't turned their backs on the NBA. Ratings for Game 5 of the NBA Finals was the second-highest since 1998, and the entire series drew its highest ratings in three years.

ngs in three years.

According to Forbes magazine's annual valuation of the league, the average franchise is now worth \$302 million, a 14 percent increase from the previous year. Forbes also said teams made an average of \$4.4 million on licensing in 2003, up 20 per-

"There probably are still some people holding out, saying, 'I remember sports when people played for the glory of sport alone.'

But most people are sophisticated to understand why it's the business that it is," said Ken Shropshire, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School who specializes in sports business.

There is still plenty about the league that's good, too. No other pro sport is as accessible, with fans seated right at courtside and no hats or helmets to obscure players' faces. LeBron James has



A week after signing a six-year, \$84 million extension with Portland, Zach Randolph had to pay his own way to Toronto after missing a team flight when he overslept.

more than lived up to his considerable hype — on and off the court.
And on the same day the Pistons and Pacers were fighting with fans, New Jersey's Richard Jefferson offered to replace a S-year-old girl's wheelchair after he learned it had been destroyed during a school field trin.

"You just can't condemn the other gus, You can't say, You can't say, You can't say, You wan to to deal with you, 'D awis said, 'D awis said wan say to have to pull them aside and say, There were guys before you wan to he position you're in today. Don't let them down by making bad decisions, whether it's on the court or off the court."

But one of those guys who was the said wan to the court of the court of the court of the court."

But one of those guys who paved the way for the NBA's phenomenal success in the last two decades has no doubt the kids will be all right.

It's not easy making the jump from high school to the pros, either on the court or off, Pacers president Larry Bird said. Give the young players some time, and they'll figure it out, Bird said.

they'll figure it out, Bird said.
"I've got a good feeling that the league, in a couple of years, is going to be a lot better than it is today," he said. "Some of the young players, they're only going to get better. They're great players now, but they'll figure it out and get better."

Expect nothing but mismatch from Kobe, Shaq

he Shaq-Kobe split is a good example of why no-fault divorces caught on so quickly.

They were never going to stay together, no matter how good the winning was. At some point, that mattered less than who got the credit. Now they're free to bicker for the rest of their competitive lifetimes about who gets the blame.

On Saturday, the rest of us start keeping score.

From a promotional angle, at

least, this is already a mismatch.
And as the latest game of the
century approaches, it's worth remembering that maybe only Don
King and Terrell Owens are better self-promoters than Shaquille
O'Neal. As a carnival barker, the
big man is a gemius. Selinig wolf
tickets is practically his
stockintrade

Asked whether he expected Bryant to challenge him by driving the lane, Shaq's first response was, "No. Not at all. It's not something that I have time to think about, because I'm not that type of player."

But given a moment to think about it, he couldn't resist adding: "But of course, when you've got a Corvette that runs into a brick wall, you know what's going to happen."

O'Neal was smiling slyly when he said it, but that little cautionary tale works at several levels. First, it puts Bryant on notice that business is just that — business — and that anyone else who tried to drive the lane would get the

Not surprising, it also fixes the differences between the two in terms most favorable to Shaq. It says one of them is fast and flashly — that would be the same guy O'Neal nicknamed "Showboat" not long after they started playing together — and the other is solid; that one is high-maintenance and the other decidedly low-tech.

For those fans who still haven't chosen sides since the breakup, it's an invitation to do just that. And why not? As he reminded the nation during the interview that ran at halftime of "Monday Night Football," O'Neal has the upper hand on the court at the moment,

"I got somebody, that other guy, who's just as lethal," Shaq said, talking about Miami teammate and budding superstar Dwyane Wade. "He's a little bit younger, he's got a lot of tools and a lot to do, but he's just as lethal. It's my job to make him lethal-est my job to make him the lethal-est



but O'Neal had no problem getting his point across. Winning is

Winning is still about making everyone play better. While his own num-

bers are down slightly this season, Wade's are up across the board — points, minutes, assists, even rebounds. And with Shaq taking Tuesday night off to rest up for the weekend, Wade produced a 33-point, 11-assist performance to lead the Heat past the Celtics, extend their season-best winning streak to nine games and improve their Eastern Conference-leading record to 20-9.

The Lakers, meanwhile, are 13-11 and still smarting over consecutive losses to Washington, for the first time in a dozen years, and Memphis, which hadn't won in 18 tries in Los Angeles, dating to when the franchise began play in Vancouver in 1995.

Their shortcomings are evident, but none is more glaring than the weakness in the middle. Bryant still thinks he can play—or, worse yet, talk—his way out of any jam, and so he tries to paper over the holes by playing at a triple-double pace every night. But all he's proved is that five upon the state of the state of

Just before O'Neal met the same fate, he warned Lakers owner Jerry Buss that hanging on to Bryant at all costs would come back to haunt the franchise

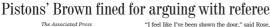
"They say I'm getting older. Of course, I am. But can't nobody mess with me," he said. "Tm like toilet paper, Pampers and toothpaste. I'm definitely proven to be effective."

O'Neal made his case once he and Bryant were separated, and now comes his first chance to make it when they share a court.

Everything about their relationship will be different, but in one important sense, nothing has changed.

"Kobe's got all-world talent," O'Neal said a few years back, when it still seemed possible they might iron out their differences. "But you have to learn to play with other people who can score."

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at: jlitke@ap.org



The Associated Press

RK — Detroit Pistons coach Larry

Brown was fined \$15,000 by the NBA on Thursday for verbal abuse of an official, a day after he had to be restrained during a postgame argument with referee Anthony Jordan.

Brown's confrontation with Jordan occurred following the Pistons' 89-82 loss to the Bulls in Detroit on Wednesday night.

"The guy wouldn't talk to me during the game, and I can't understand that—I wasn't being discourteous," Brown said after the game. "Well, maybe I was at the end, and I suppose I'll hear about that."

Raptors' Rose demoted from starting lineup

TORONTO — Jalen Rose has been dropped from the Toronto Raptors' starting lineup, and he's not happy about it.

"I feel like I've been shown the door," said kose, who was told about the move during a meeting with general manager Rob Babcock and coach Sam Mitchell before Wednesday's 98-86 victory over Utah. "I'm just waiting to see what happens."

Utah. "I'm just waiting to see what happens."

Eric Williams replaced Rose as the starting small forward. The move came five days after Toronto traded Vince Carter to New Jersey for Williams, Aaron Williams, Alonzo Mourning and two first-round draft picks.

"This isn't the first time in my career where I was in a situation where I was treated unfairly," Rose said. "I've seen this movie before."

Rose has struggled since his name came up in trade talks a month ago. He said he saw himself as just a throw-in in a possible trade of Carter. He has three years and \$48 million left on his con-

tract.

The 10-year veteran has looked disinterested while scoring just four points in two recent games. He entered the game averaging 14.8 points and 3.3 rebounds.

Illinois gets to brag, but it's no cakewalk

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Illinois had nothing but easy victories so far this season. The top-ranked Illini even cruised over the likes of Wake Forest

For the first time this season, Illinois was pushed to the final minute and it was still a victory, 70-64 over Missouri on Wednesday

tory, 70-64 over Missouri on Wednesday night. "I'd love to win every game by 20, but that's hard," guard Deron Will-



hard," guard Deron Williams said, shorting his team two points off its average margin of victory. "We needed to win a game like this."

roundup

ed to win a game like this."

Luther Head scored 20
points and Williams had
nine of his 19 over the final 3:19 to helo the Illi-

ni (11-0) overcome foul problems, poor shooting and a second-half surge by the Tigers (6-5). Roger Powell Jr. had 14 points for Illinois,

Roger Powell Jr. had 14 points for Illinois, which matched its season-worst shooting percentage (42.3) but still won its fifth straight over Missouri.

Illinois entered the game leading the country in shooting at 53 percent and the closest any opponent had come was Arkansas, which lost by 12 points. Those were things Illini coach Bruce Weber didn't think would matter in the "Brasejin' Rights" game.

"It's too big of a game, and you add the extra incentive of us being No. 1," Weber said. "They raised their level, they battled, they fought."

Linas Kleiza had 25 points, one off his career best, for Missouri. He was 11-for-13 from the free-throw line and had seven rebounds and three assists. He also helped put Illinois' frontline in foul trouble by bulling inside for

"Linas was in an attack mode," Missouri guard Jimmy McKinney said. "His mind was set, we told him they couldn't guard him.

set, we told him they couldn't guard him. They couldn't do nothing but foul him." The Tigers, down 15 points at halftime, cut it to five with just under eight minutes left and

to four on Jason Horton's three-pointer with 14 seconds to go. Illinois was 11-for-12 at the free-throw line down the stretch, including two by Willia with 10 seconds left for a 70-64 lead.

No. 7 Syracuse 88, Rice 72: At Syracuse, N.Y., Gerry McNamara had 19 points, 10 assists and a career-high nine rebounds and Josh Pace equaled his career high with 22 points for the Orange (11-1).

Michael Harris had 25 points and eight rebounds for the Owls (5-3), who lost at No. 11 Connecticut on Sunday.

No. 8 Kentucky 92, William & Mary 47: At Lexington, Ky., Chuck Hayes scored 18 points and Kelenna Azubuike added 17 for the Wild-

cats (8-1), who won their fourth straight.
Reid Markham and Taylor Mokris each had
seven points for the visiting Tribe, who shot
37.2 percent and finished with a season-high
32 turnovers.

No. 9 Georgia Tech 90, Charleston Southern 48: At Atlanta, Isma'il Muhammad scored 16 points and Luke Schenscher added 14 as the Yellow Jackets (8-1) bounced back from their first loss of the season.

Kurtis Rice had 12 points for the Bucca-

No. 11 Connecticut 87, Cent. Connecticut 59: At Hartford, Conn., Marcus Williams had a school-record 16 assists and Josh Boone and Charlie Villanueva each scored 20 points for the Huskies (6-1).

DeMario Anderson had 23 points for the Blue Devils (2-5).

No. 12 Washington 114, Sacred Heart 53: At Seattle, Jamaal Williams scored 22 points to lead a school-record eight players in double figures for the Huskies (9-1), who won their

Freshman Luke Granato had 15 points all on three-pointers — for the Pioneers (1-7), who dropped their sixth straight.

No. 15 Texas 97, Centenary 52: At Austin, Texas, Kenny Taylor scored 23 points and the Longborns (8-2) dominated with defense in the opener of a five-game holiday homestand. Kevin Taylor had 14 points for the Gents (2-7), who trailed 42-12 at halftime.

No. 18 Louisville 77, Austin Peay 49: Taquan Dean scored 16 points and Ellis Myles had 12 points and 12 rebounds for the



Missouri's Marshall Brown has his shot blocked by Illinois' Brian Randle during the first half Wednesday night. Illinois won 70-64.

Cardinals (8-2) in the championship game of their Billy Minardi Classic.

their Billy Minardi Classic.

Dean, who had 20 points in the opening-round victory over IUPUI, was selected

Maurice Hampton and William Durden each scored eight points for the Governors

No. 19 Alabama 76, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi 54: At Tuscaloosa, Ala, Kennedy Winston had 24 points and 12 rebounds for Alabama (10-1), which closed the game with a 24-4 run. Aaron White led the Islanders (7-2) with 13 points.

No. 21 Mississippi St. 95, Jacksonville St. 53: At Jackson, Miss., Lawrence Roberts had 22 points and 20 rebounds for the Bulldogs (11-2). Brandon Roberts had 15 points for the Gamecocks (4-7).

No. 22 Cincinnati 84, La Salle 63: At Cincinnati, James White and Eric Hicks each had 15 points for the Bearcats (9-0), who played in front of a home crowd held to about 2,000 by a snowstorm. Steven Smith had 35 points for the Explorers (1-7).

Jayhawks struggle as Simien is missed

BY STEVE BRISENDINE The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A nine-day Christmas break will give Kansas some much-needed rest. It won't bring back the Jayhawks' star power forward, though

Second-ranked Kansas will have to play two key nonconference games and a chunk of its Big 12 Conference season without Wayne Simien, beginning on New Year's Day when Georgia Tech visits Allen Fieldhouse.

"It is always going to be in the back of our minds," freshman guard Russell Robinson said after Kansas beat Wisconsin-Milwaukee 73-62 Wednesday night in its first game since Simien had surgery on his left thumb. "We still need to play with confidence, even without Wayne."

Simien, injured Saturday in a 64-60 victory over South Carolina, is expected to be out 4-6 weeks. His absence was obvious in the Jayhawks' first game without him, as his replacement freshman Darnell Jackson — got in foul trouble early and didn't score or get a rebound.

"I don't think it went great, but I don't think it went terrible either," coach Bill Self said.

ther," coach Bill Self said.

There were bright spots for the
Jayhawks (8-0), whose game
against Georgia Tech will be followed in short order by the conference opener and a trip to Ken-

Much of the slack was taken up by two of Simien's senior class-

Keith Langford scored 21 points and Aaron Miles had nine assists to become the Big 12's career leader in that category. Still, Langford said, "I feel good

Still, Langford said, "I feel good because we won — but if we continue to play that way, we will lose Jan. 1."

Miles has 800 assists; Oklahoma State's Doug Gottlieb had 793 from 1998 to 2000.

Miles, who also had eight rebounds, is five shy of Jacque Vaughn's school record set from 1994 to 1997 before the Rig 12

1994 to 1997, before the Big 12 was formed. "He'd better have that in the first half against Georgia Tech,"

Self said.

Freshman Alex Galindo had a solid game at forward, finishing

solid game at forward, finishing with 14 points, and Robinson added 12 points. "I feel good in my new role,"

said Galindo, who played a season-high 17 minutes. "I will need to work on playing against bigger and stronger guys. It's going to be hard work from now on, but I liked it"

Wisconsin-Milwaukee (6-3), the preseason pick to win the Horizon League, lost its third straight despite six three-pointers and a career-high 26 points from Ed McCants.

The Panthers got to 66-59 on Adrian Tigert's basket with 3:11 to go, but didn't score again until Tigert hit a three-pointer with 1:12 to go to cut the lead to 69-62.

Wakes emerges from 'The Pit' with a win

BY PETE HERRERA
The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Wake Forest coach Skip Prosser has been critical of the Demon Deacons at times this season, saying they didn't play to their potential and let teams with considerably less talent stay in games.

There were no such complaints from Prosser on Wednesday might after No. 5 Wake Forest displayed poise and scoring punch in an 81-64 victory over New Mexico before a raucous sellout crowd of 18,018 in The Pit.

Led by its backcourt trio of Chris Paul, Justin Gray and Taron Downey, some tenacious rebounding and a defense that harassed New Mexico into its worst shooting night of the season, Wake Forest (10-1) pulled away in the second half

There were no signs this time of the team that struggled to put away Elon seven days earlier or the one that survived a scare at Temple on Dec. 13 before pulling out a 67-64 victory.

"We guarded very, very well," Prosser said. "This is a team that's averaging in the mid-80s and to hold them to 33 percent and 19 percent from the three, and to beat them by 13 on the glass, is the reflection of a good effort by our kids."

Paul scored 15 of his 23 points in the second half and Gray scored 17, 11 coming over a 4½-minute stretch after he shook off a hard fall and returned to the court with the Demon Deacons leading 48-45.

"It got me going a little bit,"
Gray said of the hit he took.
"There was a lot of pushing
around, so when I got bumped up
a little bit, it told me to take my
game to another level and to play
with higher intensity."

Danny Granger had 24 points and nine rebounds for the Lobos (10-2)

Gray and Paul, who combined for nine of Wake Forest's 10 three-pointers, carried the offense every time New Mexico made a run in the second half. Downey finished with 16 points, doing most of his damage with 12 in the first half. "We talked to our three guards

and said this game should never get away from us," Prosser said. "They made a couple of runs and the place was ready to get loud, but I credit the poise of my players."

New Mexico twice got within a point early in the second half, but aside from Granger had trouble scoring inside even after 6-foot-9, 291-pound Wake Forest center Eric Williams sat out the final 17 minutes with four fouls.

"I actually think it helped them because when Williams is in the game, their whole focus is to get the ball inside," New Mexico coach Ritchie McKay said. "With one less scorer out there, Paul and Gray had a green light."

Williams scored just six points, the first time this season he failed to reach double figures.

While Williams was in there, he and Jamaal Levy dominated inside as Wake Forest outrebounded the Lobos 47-34. Levy had 10 rebounds and Williams eight.

New Mexico took its last lead at 22-21 with 6:51 left in the first half on a layup by Alfred Neale. Wake Forest went ahead to stay on a three-pointer by Paul and a jumper by Downey.

A three-point play by Granger got New Mexico to 48-45 with 13:12 left. It was at that point that Gray took over, hitting three three-pointers and a short jumper. His fourth and last three-pointer put Wake Forest ahead 61-51.

"Coach put me in a situation with the ball in my hands and told me to make plays," Gray said. "When you're in a venue like this, you either create something for yourself or you create something for others. And tonight, I was making some shots."

New Mexico, which earlier this season set a school record with 20 three-pointers against Santa Clara, missed 21 of 25 from beyond the arc. The Lobos had a season-low nine assists.

"You can look at one stat and see what happened," McKay said. "We assisted the ball only three times in the second half. We weren't patient."

BCS planning new formula without AP poll

By RALPH D. RUSSO

The Associated Press

NEW YORK - The Bowl Championship Series is ready to move on without The Associated Press college football poll

"I wasn't surprised by the AP's decision." Big East commissioner Mike Tranghese said. "I don't think it's a negative issue. We're just going to have to put our heads together and come up with an alternative way of picking the teams for the 1-2

The Associated Press told the BCS on Tuesday to stop using its poll to determine which teams play for a national title.

BCS coordinator and Big 12 commissioner Kevin Weiberg has said the BCS hopes to have a new formula ready by April "We're not heading toward a playoff,"

Tranghese said Wednesday. So for the second straight season and the fifth time since the system was implement ed in 1998, the BCS will change the way it

computes its standings. This season, the BCS streamlined its formula and put heavy emphasis on the AP and ESPN/USA Today coaches poll. The goal was to make it more likely that Nos. 1

More changes brewing for troubled system

and 2 in the polls played in the national title game, unlike last season when Southern California was a consensus No. 1 but left out of the BCS championship.

Without the AP poll, the BCS's current formula is left with the coaches poll and six

computer rankings The BCS could just stick with those two and change the weighting system. Or it could add more computers. Or maybe it could even revive the strength of schedule component, which was eliminated because

it was deemed redundant. "We certainly have other options on how to select and rank the teams," Pac-10 com-

missioner Tom Hansen said. The BCS already was looking at the possibility of a selection committee picking the teams for the championship game, taking a page from the NCAA basketball tourna-

But a committee probably wouldn't be the best way to fill the two at-large spots And starting with the 2006 season, the number of at-large teams is destined to go up as the BCS expands to five games to allow greater access to teams from outside the six conferences that now have automat-

"Adding the fifth game is going to give us less pressure," Hansen said. "One of the problems has been good teams being left out. With one more game, that's less likely

to happen." The original BCS formula was comprised of an average of the two human polls, an average of three computer rank-

ings, total losses and strength of schedule. Since then the computers rankings have changed in number and name and other elements have come and gone. The polls

have been a constant. The coaches poll is not likely to follow the AP's nath.

"We'll be a part of it if we are asked to be a part of it," said Grant Teaff, the president of the American Football Coaches Association, which oversees the poll

The AP said in a statement that the BCS's unauthorized use of its poll has

"harmed AP's reputation and interfered with AP's agreements with AP poll vot-

So losing the AP poll doesn't spell doom for the BCS and is not a step toward creating the playoff system the fans and a growing number of coaches want.

The university presidents have made it clear they won't sign off on a playoff sys-

ABC, unhappy with the BCS's idea of adding another game with no championship ramifications, tried to push the BCS toward a playoff during contract negotiations for broadcast rights earlier this year. But the BCS simply found another suitor. happy to buy what it was selling.

The BCS signed a four-year deal worth \$320 million with Fox last month for the broadcast rights to the Fiesta, Orange and Sugar bowls from 2007-10 and the national title game from 2007-09.

"The BCS is here and it's going to contin-ue," Tranghese said. "But the BCS is a target for all the playoff proponents. When something like this happens they jump on it. They look at something like this as a crack. They don't understand the strong position of our presidents.

Bowling Green pulls away from Memphis

By JOHN ZENOR The Associated Press

MOBILE, Ala. - Omar Jacobs and P.J. Pope helped Bowling Green turn a shootout into a blowout in the GMAC Bowl

Jacobs passed for 365 vards and five touchdowns - four in the first half - and Pope ran 28 times for 151 yards and a pair of 1-yard scores in the Falcons' 52-35 victory over Memphis on Wednesday night.



Mondays in Stars and Stripes

Pope also caught a 13-yard pass for the only score of the third quarter to give the Falcons (9-3) a

"He might be our best offensive player overall," coach Gregg Brandon said.

And that's saving something. Jacobs, who capped a marvelous debut season as a starter, connected with Charles Sharon and Steve Sanders for two touchdown

passes each before halftime. The Falcons led 35-28 at halftime and won their fourth consecutive bowl game

"We've been putting up big numbers in the first half but we don't necessarily do it in the second half," said Pope, who has scored in nine straight games. "We were talking about finishing all week.

The Tigers (8-4), playing in back-to-back bowl games for the first time, couldn't keep up with the nation's No. 4 offense, which totaled 558 total yards.

Memphis' DeAngelo Williams



Bowling Green running back P.J. Pope, left, runs past the Memph defense during the first quarter in the GMAC Bowl on Wednesday.

ran for 120 yards on 18 carries before limping to the locker room at the end of the third quarter with a broken right leg

He hurt it earlier in the game but went back in and couldn't get through a tearful postgame press

"He had been their weapon all year, and with him being hurt and

out of the game we knew they're just a one-dimensional team, Bowling Green linebacker Joyon Burks said.

Danny Wimprine matched Jacobs' performance, going 26-for-39 for 324 yards and four touchdowns. But Wimprine passed for just 11 yards in the

third quarter and lost a fumble. Jacobs, whose led the nation and set a Mid-American Conference record with 41 TD passes. completed 26 of 44 passes with an interception to earn Most Valuable Player honors.

If his first season as a starter is an indication, he's in line for the kind of prolific career of former MAC quarterbacks such as Byron Leftwich and Ben Roethlisberger.

"We saw glimpses of it in the few games he played in last year," Bowling Green offensive lineman Andrew Hart said. "We knew he had a chance to be pretty good. We didn't know how good Jacobs set the MAC record with his 41st overall touchdown rushing or passing in the first quarter, adding four more. He also joined Roethlisberger and

Leftwich as the league's only 4.000-vard passers.

Pitt hires Wannstedt By ALAN ROBINSON

The Associated Press

Miami Dolphins coach Dave Wannstedt accepted the coaching job at his alma mater, Pittsburgh, on Thursday, exactly a week after he turned the Panthers down and said he wasn't ready to coach again.

Wannstedt, aside as the Dolphins' coach by mutual agreement when the team was 1-8 this season, felt differently after talking to Pitt athletic director Jeff Long early this week. Wannstedt agreed to take the job after Long agreed to bump up the ries for Pitt's assistants

After Wannstedt pulled out, Long interviewed Baltimore ens offensive coordinator Matt Cavanaugh and Pitt detwice each. fensive coordinator Rhoads Wannstedt was believed to be Pitt's first choice all along. Wannstedt was known to have the backing of Pitt chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg.

Wannstedt a native of Raldwin. Pa., a Pittsburgh suburb. has never been a college head coach, but is a former Pitt assistant and is known to be an innovative defensive coach. He succeeds Walt Harris, who is leaving for Stanford coaching Pitt to a 25-12 record the past three seasons — Pitt's best three-year mark since Jackie Sherrill went 33-3 from 1979-81.

Pitt interviewed Oklahoma co-defensive coordinator Bo Pelini, but it never really strayed beyond Pitt grads or former coaches associated with the school, New York Gidefensive coordinator Tim Lewis, a former Pitt and Pittsburgh Steelers assistant, and former Pitt player and as-sistant Sal Sunseri of the Caro-lina Panthers also talked with



Dodgers, Drew OK five-year contract

BY RONALD BLUM The Associated Press

NEW YORK - J.D. Drew is set to join the Los Angeles Dodgers, while Arizona plans to put aside Randy Johnson trade talks until after Christmas.

Drew and the Dodgers have reached a preliminary agreement on a \$55 million, five-year contract that probably will be finalized Thursday

Drew's contract, first reported Wednesday by The Record of Hackensack, N.J., was contingent on him passing a physical exam.



He will receive a \$2 million signing bonus and a \$9 million salary next season, then earn

\$11 million annually in the final four years.

A day after meeting with New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner in Tampa, Fla., center fielder Carlos Beltran got together Wednesday in Kissimmee, Fla with the Houston Astros the team he helped get within one victory of the World Series.

As teams and agents worked to get deals in place before the holidays, pitcher Orlando Hernandez agreed Wednesday to an \$8 mil lion, two-year contract with the Chicago White Sox.

In two other preliminary agreements, outfielder Moises Alou got a two-year deal with San Francisco worth about \$13.25 million and right-hander Wade Miller. cut by Houston on Monday, received a \$1.5 million, one-year contract from the Boston Red

The Yankees, who want to add Johnson to their All-Star-filled clubhouse, meanwhile finalized their \$39.95 million, four-year contract with right-hander Carl Pavano. The World Series champion Red Sox completed their \$25.5 million, three-year deal with right-hander Matt Clement.

Florida, which had wanted to re-sign Payano reached a preliminary agreement on a \$750,000, one-year contract with right-hander reliever John Reidling, who was let go by Cincinnati on Mon-

In other free-agent news

- St. Louis added left-hander Mike Myers (\$600,000) and kept outfielder So Taguchi (\$550,000).
- San Diego got outfielder Mark Sweeney (\$575,000). ■ Cleveland agreed to minor
- league deals with right-hander Jason Bere and left-hander Billy Traher
- Tampa Bay settle on a one-year contract with former Cleveland first baseman/designated hitter Josh Phelps.



J.D. Drev

Two players eligible for salary arbitration agreed to one-year contracts: Expos catcher Brian Schneider (\$2 million) and San Diego outfielder Dave Roberts (\$1.35 million), who was acquired from Boston this week.

Arizona, whose trade with the Dodgers and Yankees came apart Tuesday, said it isn't looking for a new partner to create a three-team deal that would send Johnson to the Yankees, Managing partner Ken Kendrick said the Diamondbacks may keep the Big Unit for 2005

"We're all in a holiday mode starting today, basically," Ken-drick said. "You never know what to expect in the baseball world but I think right now our focus is to get to our families and let everybody have a little down time

The Yankees were livid over the Dodgers' decision to scuttle the deal, insisting that Los Angeles had said late Monday and early Tuesday it was going ahead with the trade, which would have sent pitcher Javier Vazquez from New York to the Dodgers and outfielder Shawn Green from Los Angeles to the Diamondbacks.

"After everything seemed to be greed upon by midnight Monday, the only way it could work is if you have physicals taken by a certain time Wednesday." Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said. "And that was not feasible - the time of year we're at, Christmas week, people out of the country.

Beltran and his agent, Scott Boras, spoke with Astros owner Drayton McLane, team president Tal Smith and general manager Tim Purpura at the team's spring training camp.

"This is a very good step," Purpura said. "This is a continuation of what we all knew from the beginning was going to be a long pro-CASS

If Houston doesn't reach an agreement with Beltran by Jan. 8, the Astros would be ineligible to re-sign him until May 1. That makes the next two weeks criti-

"I think we're at a point with this negotiation where we have entertained offers from everyone, Boras said. "We're moving at a much more rapid pace."

Bertuzzi's plea of guilty draws year's probation

VANCOUVER, British Colum-Vancouver Canucks star Todd Bertuzzi pleaded guilty to assault, more than nine months after slugging Colorado's Steve Moore in the head from behind during a game.

Bertuzzi, who faced a maximum of 18 months in prison, was given a conditional discharge Wednesday, the sentence prosecutor Garth Loeppky recommended after Bertuzzi agreed to plead

Bertuzzi received a year's probation in which he is not allowed to play in a game against Moore. who was hospitalized with three fractured vertebrae, facial cuts, post-concussion symptoms and



amnesia after the March 8 hit. Bertuzzi also must perform 80 hours of community service.

If he complies and meets probation requirements, he won't have a criminal record "I have concluded that the im-

position of a discharge is not contrary to the public interest," Judge Herb Weitzel said. Now Bertuzzi has to renair his

reputation in hockey circles. Bertuzzi was suspended indefinitely by the NHL, missing 13 regular-season games and seven postseason games while losing nearly \$502,000 in salary On Friday he was barred from playing in Europe by the International Ice

Hockey Federation Bill Daly, the NHL's chief legal officer, said the league expects Bertuzzi to ask for a quick hearing to reinstate his playing status despite the lockout that threatens to wine out the season. The players' association said it wouldn't stand in the way of a hearing with commissioner Gary Bettman.

Moore, who does not have an NHL contract and still has health issues from Bertuzzi's punch, was not in the courtroom, but delivered a statement that was read before the sentence was handed

"I have no desire to interact with him (Bertuzzi) in any way, Moore said, "If I'm ever able to play again, I would ask that Todd Bertuzzi never be permitted to play in any sporting activity I'm

Tim Danson, Moore's Toronto-based lawyer, said a civil suit against Bertuzzi hinges on whether Moore can resume his career

Herminator settles with German insurance firm

VIENNA, Austria — Austrian ski star Hermann Maier has settled out of court with a German insurance company over the 2001 road accident that nearly ended his career, his lawyer said Thurs-

Karl Heinz Klee declined to give details on the terms of the settlement between his client and the insurer of the German car



Todd Bertuzzi, accompanied by his wife, Julie, arrives at Provinical Court in Vancouver, British Columbia on Wednesday. Bertuzzi pleaded guilty to assault for slugging Colorado forward Steve Moore from behind and driving his face into the ice during a game last season.

driver who was found negligent in the accident.

The crash in August 2001 between Maier's motorcycle and the car near his hometown of Flachau left the athlete on the verge of kidney failure and nearly resulted in the amoutation of his right leg. Doctors inserted screws and a titanium rod into his leg, and grafted skin from his left arm onto his right shin. For several days, two tennis ball-sized blood clots also paralyzed his legs. But he recovered learning to

walk again and then ski, despite excruciating pain. After missing the 2002 Winter

Olympics in Salt Lake City, he returned in the 2003 season tied American Bode Miller for the silver medal in the suner.G in the championships clinched the World Cup title.

Organizers negotiate transfer of funds to cover shortfall

ROME - Organizers of the Turin 2006 Winter Olympics said Thursday they are negotiating a transfer of funds from a public agency to cover a budget shortfall estimated to be over \$243 million Organizers said in a statement

they were meeting in Rome on Thursday to finalize a transfer of funds from Sviluppo Italia, an agency linked to the Economy Ministry that promotes business development and investment.

Organizers have been looking for ways to cover the budget shortfall ahead of a vote on a provisional budget for the games.

Report: Russian swimming great Popov retires

PARIS - Four-time Olympic champion swimmer Alexander Popov of Russia has retired.

The French sports daily L'Equipe reported Thursday that Popov, 33, made the decision after consulting with his coach and family upon returning home from the Athens Olympics in August, which he left without a medal, L'Equipe reported.

A retirement ceremony is being planned in Switzerland, where Popov has resided for the past two years, L'Equipe said.

The four-time Russian Olympi an won the 50-meter and 100-meter freestyle in the 1992 Barcelona Games and in Atlanta in 1996. He earned a silver in the 2000 Games in Sydney.

Pyeongchang to bid for 2014 Winter Games

SEOUL South Korea - Pveongchang was selected Thursday as South Korea's bidder for the 2014 Winter Olympics, winning a second chance to try for the

The Korean Olympic Committee called its Standing Committee on Thursday to choose between Pyeongchang and Muju as the bidder for the Winter Games, and unanimously voted for Pyeo-ngchang, said Kim Choon-ki, a committee spokesman.

Pyeongchang, 100 miles east of Seoul, bid unsuccessfully for the 2010 Olympics, losing out to Vancouver. British Columbia.

Vick gets \$100-million, 10-year deal

By GEORGE HENRY The Associated Press

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. - Michael Vick couldn't be happier.

The Atlanta Falcons offered him the ultimate show of respect with a 10-year contract that guarantees the star quarterback an NFL-record \$37 million in bonuses and is worth more than \$100 million.

"It is, man. It is," Vick said with a smile on Thursday. "You know, making a commitment says a lot, not just to me, but to our team."

Vick told The Associated Press two hours before a scheduled news conference to announce the deal that his agent, Joel Segal, reached an

agreement in principle with Falcons General Manager Rich McKay after Atlanta's overtime victory over Carolina on Saturday night.

Vick confirmed that the deal is worth over \$100 million.

"I just went out and played my game and didn't worry about it," Vick said. "I just left in the hands of my agent and my attorneys."

Vick's contract surpasses the \$98 million deal Indianapolis quarterback Peyton Manning signed in March. Manning was guaranteed

\$34.5 million in bonuses. According to a league official who requested anonymity, Vick reached incentives in his original contract, a six-year, \$62 million deal, that would have allowed him to void the 2005 and 2006 seasons next month. Had he done so, the 24-year-old Vick would have become an unrestricted free agent on March 2.

Vick's new deal was first reported by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution on its Web site.

'We've said on numerous occasions that this franchise is committed to bringing a world championship to the city of Atlanta, the state of Georgia, as well as to building a sustainable winning organization consistently in the hunt," Falcons owner Arthur Blank said in a statement, "Today's contract extension for Michael, in our opinion, moves us closer to achieving those goals

Vick, the No. 1 overall draft pick of 2001, has a 24-12-1 career record. He is 14-4 since return. ing from a broken ankle last year, and this season led the Falcons to their third division title.

Michael Vick's contract includes an NFL-record \$37 million in bonuses.

NFC North title presents itself to Minnesota on Christmas Eve

BY DON SEEHOLZER St. Paul Pioneer Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. - Friday's NFC North showdown against the Green Bay Packers is being called the biggest game in years by the Vikings, who haven't made the playoffs since 2000.

The Packers have been in the playoffs every year since then and have qualified for the 2004 postseason, but take it from coach Mike Sherman, the feeling is mutual.

"Obviously, whenever you're playing for a division championship or any championship, it's a big game for both sides," he said. "It has tremendous implications in regard to the playoffs and whatnot. It's just as big over here as it is over there.'

As did the Vikings, Sherman said he and his players figured when the NFL schedule was released in April that the Christmas Eve game would decide the division title. And he said the fact the Packers have clinched a playoff spot won't take anything away from their motivation.

"Absolutely not," he said. "Our first goal was to win our division. We haven't done that. ... The fact that we're in the playoffs was kind of a secondary thing. That's expected around here. You don't get any points for just getting into the playoffs. You have to win the division. That's kind of the mind-set of the football team."

With Philadelphia Eagles receiver Terrell Owens out until at least the Super Bowl after ankle surgery Wednesday, the winner of Friday's winner-take-all game could stand as good a chance as anyone in the NFC playoffs. Sherman isn't looking that far

ahead "I could care less about Terrell he said

Owens' injury," more concerned about Randy



Minnesota Vikings

9 p.m. Friday **AFN-Sports and Radio**

Game time is Central European



Vikings safety Corey Chavous, celebrating an interception in Detroit last week, is trying to help Minnesota end a four-year playoff drought.

Moss, Daunte Culpepper, (Antoine) Winfield and all those guys on defense. Terrell Owens is the furthest thing from my mind. Randy Moss and company are right there at the forefront."

Besides, the Packers have a receiver injury of their own, with Robert Ferguson out of this game and perhaps for the season after he suffered head and neck injuries in Sunday's 28-25 loss to Jack-

That leaves Green Bay with a receiving corps of Javon Walker. Donald Driver and Antonio Chatman and without its leading kickoff returner, so Ferguson's absence figures to be felt.

Walker, who ranks second in the NFC in receptions with 81 and has 1,210 yards and 10 touchdowns, was selected to his first Pro Rowl

With Moss around, Walker will get second billing in Friday's game, but the third-year pro said

"He's Randy Moss," Walker "He's done in this league what not too many receivers have done, so he deserves that. I've just got to go out and play my game They'll know that I'm out there." Asked where Friday's game

ranks on his personal list, Walker said it's just another big game "except that it's on Christmas Eve.

Sherman, who first experi-enced this rivalry when he joined the Packers as a tight ends coach in 1997, says every Vikings-Packers game is important.

Ever since I've been coming to these games as a coach, whether it's an assistant coach or as a head coach, they've been pretty intense," he said. "I don't know it any other way."

NFL injury report

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OAKLAND RAIDERS (6-9) AT KANSAS CITY CHIEFS (6-8) — Raiders: OUT: G Ron Stone (knee); RB Tyrone Wheatley (hamstring/root) DOUBETULI TE COUNTIES AND THE PROPERTY OF THE STONE (HAMSTRING) BUCHAND (Tailbone); LB Sam Williams (ankle); CB Charles Woodson (knee). QUESTIONABLE: LB DeLawrence Grant (Knee); TONABLE: LB DELAWRENCE GRANT (KNEE); TONABLE TIONABLE: LB DeLawrence Grant (Greek: T Barry Sims (back), PROBABLE: QB Kerry Col-lins (abdomen); WR John Stone (hamstring), Cledets: OUT: DE Vonnie Moldidy (groin). One Woods (Greek), QUESTIONABLE: RB Der-rick Blaylock (Mee); C Dris Bober (foe); WR Chris Horn (Kneel), PROBABLE: LB Monty Chris Horn (Kneel), PROBABLE: LB Monty Chris Horn (Kneel), PROBABLE: LB Monty Chris Horn (kneel), PROBABLE: WINDER (Dana Casy), Christopher (10b); T Willie Roat (ankle); DT Junior Slavii (ankle); DT Ryan Sims (ankle).

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CAROLINA PANTHERS (6-8) AT TAMPA RAY

BUCCANEERS (5-9) — Panthers: QUESTION-ABLE: DE Kemp Rasmussen (neck), PROBA-BLE: RB Casey Cramer (concussion); DE All Wallace (back), Buccaneers: PROBABLE: DT Chidi Ahanotu (groin); DE Simeon Rice (ham-string); DE Greg Spires (lower back)

string); DE Greg Spires (lower back).

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(5-9) — Bears: OUT: RB Bryan Johnson (foot);
LB Brian Urlacher (humstring); S Cameron
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HOUSTON TEXANS (6-8) AT JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS (8-6) - Texans: OUT: G Zach Wieg-ert (knee). QUESTIONABLE: RB Tony Hollings (hamstring). Jaguars: QUESTIONABLE: O Juran Bolden (quadrice); RB Fred Taylor (knee). PROBABLE: S Deke Cooper (groin): DT Marcus Stroud (knee).

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Keystone State dominance

Nine Eagles, six Steelers are headed for Honolulu

BY BARRY WILNER The Associated Press

NEW YORK - Going 13-1 hasn't just assured the Eagles and Steelers of division titles. It's also made them the leaders in Pro Bowl players

Donovan McNabb and Terrell Owens were among nine Philadelphia players chosen for the game the most representatives voted in for one team since 1998.

The Steelers had six Pro Bowlers in results released Wednesday.

Joining quarterback McNabb and wide receiver Owens, who had ankle surgery Wednesday and is out for the rest of the regular season and perhaps the playoffs, were tackle Tra Thomas, linebacker Jeremiah Trotter, placekicker David Akers, special teamer Ike Reese, and three of four secondary starters: cornerback Lito Sheppard and safeties Michael Lewis and Brian Dawkins

"You just try to encourage all the guys," McNabb said. "It's good to see that Lito. Mike and Ike have made it and get an opportunity to get over there and get a good feel of All-Star play and to say that they've been a Pro Bowler. It says a lot for this organization, it says a lot for those players and it says a lot for this team

"We're going to continue this thing on and continue to open up eyes

The Eagles have clinched home-field advantage for the playoffs. Pittsburgh owns the AFC North crown and had the next-most selections in balloting by players, coaches and fans. The Steelers had six: linebackers Joes Porter and James Farrior, safety Troy Polamalu, center Jeff Hart ings, guard Alan Faneca and wide receiver Hines Ward. That led the AFC, ahead of Baltimore and



Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb was selected to play in his fifth Pro Bowl, Nine players is the most Philadelphia has ever had in a Pro Bowl and the most for a NFL team since 1998.

Kansas City with five each, while Indianapolis and New England had four apiece.

"We do have a good team and our individual success is a direct reflection of our team," Farrior said.

Green Ray Atlanta and Dallas had four each in the NFC for the game in Honolulu on Feb. 13. There were 25 first-time selec-

For only the third time, a set of brothers made the same Pro Bowl. Cornerback Ronde Barber of Tampa Bay and running back Tiki Barber of the Giants were selected for the NFC roster - the

The other brothers were Bruce and Clay Matthews in 1989 and 1990, Sterling and Shannon Sharpe from 1993-95.

first twins to make it

Peyton Manning set a record in fan voting and was a runaway

choice for AFC quarterback, along with the Patriots' Tom Brady and the Chargers' Drew Brees.

"I certainly appreciate it," said Manning, one touchdown pass short of Dan Marino's record of 48 in a season, "I know it's voted on by my peers, by the coaches and the fans, and I'm proud to represent the Colts there

The other Colts on the AFC roster were wide receiver Marvin Harrison, running back Edgerrin James and defensive end Dwight Freeney, the league's sacks lead-

On becoming first Colts defender since end John Dutton from 1975-77 to make it two straight years, Freeney said, "You want to make it a consistent thing.'

Tampa Bay linebacker Derrick Brooks made it for the eighth consecutive time, joining four others - Jack Lambert, Lawrence Tay-

Pro Bowl Roster

American Football Conference

Offense
Wide receivers — Marvin Harrison, Indianapolis; Andre Johnson, Houston; Chad
Johnson, Cincinnati; Hines Ward, Pitts-Tackles - Willie Anderson, Cincinnati; onathan Ogden, Baltimore; Willie Roaf,

onathan Oguen, canalical (ansas City, Guards – Alan Faneca, Pittsburgh; Will shields, Kansas City; Brian Waters, Kansas

ning, Indianapolis.

Running backs — Edgerrin James, Indianapolis; Curtis Martin, New York Jets; La-Dainian Tomlinson, San Diego.

Fullback — Tony Richardson, Kansas City.

rroud, Jacksonville.

Outside linebackers — Joey Porter, Pitts-

, Baltimore. **le linebackers** — James Farrior, Pitts-; Ray Lewis, Baltimore. **lerbacks** — Champ Bailey, Denver; lames, Cincinnati; Chris McAlister, rong safety — Troy Polamulu, Pitts sh: Ed Reed, Baltimore.

urgh; Ed Reed, Baltimore. Free safeties — John Lynch, Denver. Specialists Punter — Shane Lechler, Oakland. Placekicker — Adam Vinatieri, New En

land. Kick-return specialist – Terrence

Special teamer - Larry Izzo, New En-

gland.

National Football Conference
Offense
Wide receivers — Joe Horn, New Orleans; Muhsin Muhammad, Carolina; Terrell Owens, Philadelphia; Javon Walker,
Green Bay.

Tackles — Orlando Pace, St. Louis;
Walter Jones, Seattle: Tra Thomas, Phila-

leiphia.

Guards — Larry Allen, Dallas; Marco Riv-era, Green Bay; Steve Hutchinson, Seattle.

Centers — Olin Kreutz, Chicago; Matt lirk, Minnesota.

Tight ends — Alge Crumpler, Atlanta; ason Witten, Dallas. Quarterbacks — Daunte Culpepper, Min-lesota; Donovan McNabb, Philadelphia; dichael Vick, Atlanta.

lichael Vick, Atlanta. **Running backs —** Ahman Green, Green ay; Tiki Barber, New York Giants; Shaun Bay; Tiki Barber, New York Giants; Shaun Mexander, Seattle. Fullback — William Henderson, Green

uesota.

Outside linebackers — Keith Brooking,
tilanta; Derrick Brooks, Tampa Bay; Mar-rus Washington, Washington.

Inside linebackers — Dan Morgan, Caroli-la; Jeremiah Trotter, Philadelphia. Strong safety — Michael Lewis, Philadel-

Free safety — Brian Dawkins, Philadel-phia; Roy Williams. Dallas

Specialists
Punter — Mitch Berger, New Orleans.
Placekicker — David Akers, Philadelphia.
Kick-return specialist — Eddle Drummond, Detroit.

Special teamer - Ike Reese, Philadel-

lor. Mike Singletary and Reggie White — who have won a Super Bowl. Defensive Player of the Year and eight straight trips to Hawaii

"You take it in stride," Brooks "We're in a different position. You always want to be humble by the selection, don't want it to take away from the goal at hand. ... I'm still at the top of my game. I appreciate the league recognizes that."

Two consistent Pro Bowlers, Vikings wideout Randy Moss and Bears linebacker Brian Urlacher did not make it, mostly because of injuries. Also absent were such frequent Pro Bowl choices as Green Bay QB Brett Favre, St. Louis RB Marshall Faulk, Philadelphia DE Jevon Kearse and Oakland CB Charles Woodson.

Curtis Martin, the league's leading rusher with 1,511 yards, was one of three Jets chosen, joining

defensive end John Abraham and center Kevin Mawae. Martin is having one of the best seasons of a 10-year career in which he has rushed for at least 1,000 yards each time.

'It feels good to do it in your 10th year, especially at the position like running back," he said. "There are so many other good talented running backs in the NFL, some of whom I feel have much more talent than I do. To be chosen over some of them, it feels good

The other AFC running back was San Diego's LaDainian Tom-

The other NFC runners were Shaun Alexander of Seattle and Ahman Green of Green Bay.

Joining McNabb as NFC quarterbacks were Michael Vick of At-lanta and Daunte Culpepper of

Tennessee, Cleveland and San Francisco had no players selected.

Dolphins offer LSU's Saban head coaching job The Associated Press day's game against Cleveland, declined to with you," Holmgren said, adding that Rob-

DAVIE Fla - Nick Sahan took over LSU's struggling football program five years ago and delivered a championship team



The Miami Dolphins hope he'll do the same for them. Miami

coaching job Wednesday to Saban, the favorite for the position since Dave Wannstedt resigned last month Saban told LSU athletic director Skip Bertman he might need until Friday to decide whether to take over one of the NFL's worst teams.

"I know he wants to make as quick a decision as he can," Bertman said Thursday "But there's no pressure on him to make a fast one, certainly none from the universi-ty. So he should think things through.

"The question is: Does he stay here and continue to build, or does he take on a new challenge?"

Saban has previously said he'd prefer to have the situation resolved by Christmas Day, when LSU travels to Orlando for its bowl game against Iowa

A Dolphins source, speaking on condi-

NFL injury update

Injuries to prominent NFL players, followed by team's prognosis. (See Page 41 for complete injury report provided by the league): Bears: LB Brian Urlacher (hamstring) out for rest of Bengals: RB Chris Perry (hernia) out for rest of sea-on: OB Carson Palmer (knee) questionable.

tion of anonymity, confirmed that Saban's agent, Jimmy Sexton, and team owner ga confirmed the offer in a one-sentence

Sexton did not return phone calls to his office or cell phone.

The answering machine at Saban's home in Baton Rouge, La., was full. Saban has been courted as a NFL coach

for nearly a decade. He was approached previously by at least five teams, including a year ago by Atlanta and Chicago, but turned down every offer.

He was the first of three candidates the Dolphins interviewed Former Oakland Raiders coach Art Shell

interviewed Monday, and interim Miami coach Jim Bates met with Huizenga on Tuesday.

Bates, preparing the Dolphins for Sun-

discuss the situation Thursday. "When I started this job, the main focus

was to prepare this team to win games, to improve this team, to give them a positive note going out in a tough year with every-thing that has taken place," Bates said "That is still my objective."

Bates is 2-3 since taking over as interim coach

Seahawks WR Robinson returns after four-game suspension

KIRKLAND, Wash. - Koren Robinson said all the right things Wednesday, insisting he has learned his lesson. "It was a learning experience," the Seat-

tle Seahawks receiver said after returning from a four-game suspension for violating the NFL's substance-abuse rules. "Don't put vourself in certain situations or stuff like that can happen." Coach Mike Holmgren was vague about

what role Robinson will play Sunday when Arizona (5-9) visits Seattle in a game that is key to the postseason prospects for both teams. The Seahawks (7-7) can secure a playoff spot with a victory.

"I haven't really decided, to be honest

Rice. "Hopefully, we can keep them both fresh that way. We need both of them to make plays." Dallas sticking with Testaverde at OB

IRVING, Texas - Bill Parcells still

inson probably will split time with Jerry

thinks Vinny Testaverde gives the Dallas Cowboys the best chance to win, so he's keeping the 41-year-old quarterback as his starter

But Parcells might not stick with Testaverde throughout Sunday's game against the Washington Redskins.

Parcells said Wednesday he's told Tony Romo to be ready to take the first snaps of his two-year NFL career. Parcells is giving Romo "quite a bit of additional work" with the first team in practice this week.

"I'm preparing two guys to play," Parcells said.

Left out of the equation is highly touted rookie Drew Henson, who was dropped to third-string last week and will spend this week working with the scout team. Parcells said Henson might play the finale against the New York Giants.



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SPORTS



Dolphins offer coaching iob to LSU's Saban. Page 42



From courtside brawls to courtroom battles. NBA's image needs a boost after ugly 2004

BY NANCY ARMOUR The Associated Press

At least the "Bad Boys" kept their shenanigans on the court when they were wreaking havoc in the NBA.

Nowadays there are enough mug shots out there to spawn a new trading card industry. Players are doing and saying things that defy common sense, annoy ing fans with their high-priced

Wins seem to rank only slightly ahead of endorsement opportuni ties and monster contracts, and those "knuckleheads" Karl Malone once dissed haven't gotten a clue yet.

Even the Christmas Day games, once a showcase for the class of the league, have attitude One game is Kobe vs. Shaq, dueling egos that helped bring down what could have been the NBA's next dynasty.

The other is the first meeting of the Pistons and Pacers since that Nov. 19 brawl that spilled into the stands, one of the ugliest fights in sports history.

What happened to all that love and goodwill created by Michael,

Magic and Bird? "People don't realize the things we do as players can really affect a lot of lives," said Antonio Davis, first vice president of the players union. "We're not trying to take away their own sense of self. If



The NBA's image has taken some hits this year, starting with a sexual assault trial against Lakers star Kobe Bryant, top. Police had to use a stun gun on the Timberwolves Michael Olowokandi, above, when he refused to leave an Indianapolis bar last month. The Nuggets' Carmelo Anthony, right, was in a bar fight, briefly charged with marijuana pos session and seen on a homemade DVD where a man warns that people who snitch on drug dealers get "a hole in their head."

you want to braid your hair, wear your jeans hanging off your butt, do some of those things because they're you, that's fine.

"But regardless of what organization, corporation you work for, you can't go out and have run-ins with the law, hurt the people that drive your business." Davis said.

You just can't do some of those things

Like everything else in society.

the NBA goes through cycles. This latest one seems to be driven, largely, by the influx of younger players. The average age in the league has dropped by almost a vear, down from 27.82 in 1998 to



27.028 this year.

who do go to college rarely stay all four years

More and more kids are jumping straight from high school to the pros — a record eight were taken in last summer's draft, all in the first round — and those

SEE IMAGE ON PAGE 37



No. 1 Illini hang on to win 'Braggin' Rights'

Page 38



Jacobs helps lead **Bowling Green's** blowout in GMAC

Page 39



reach five-vear. \$55 million agreement

Page 40

